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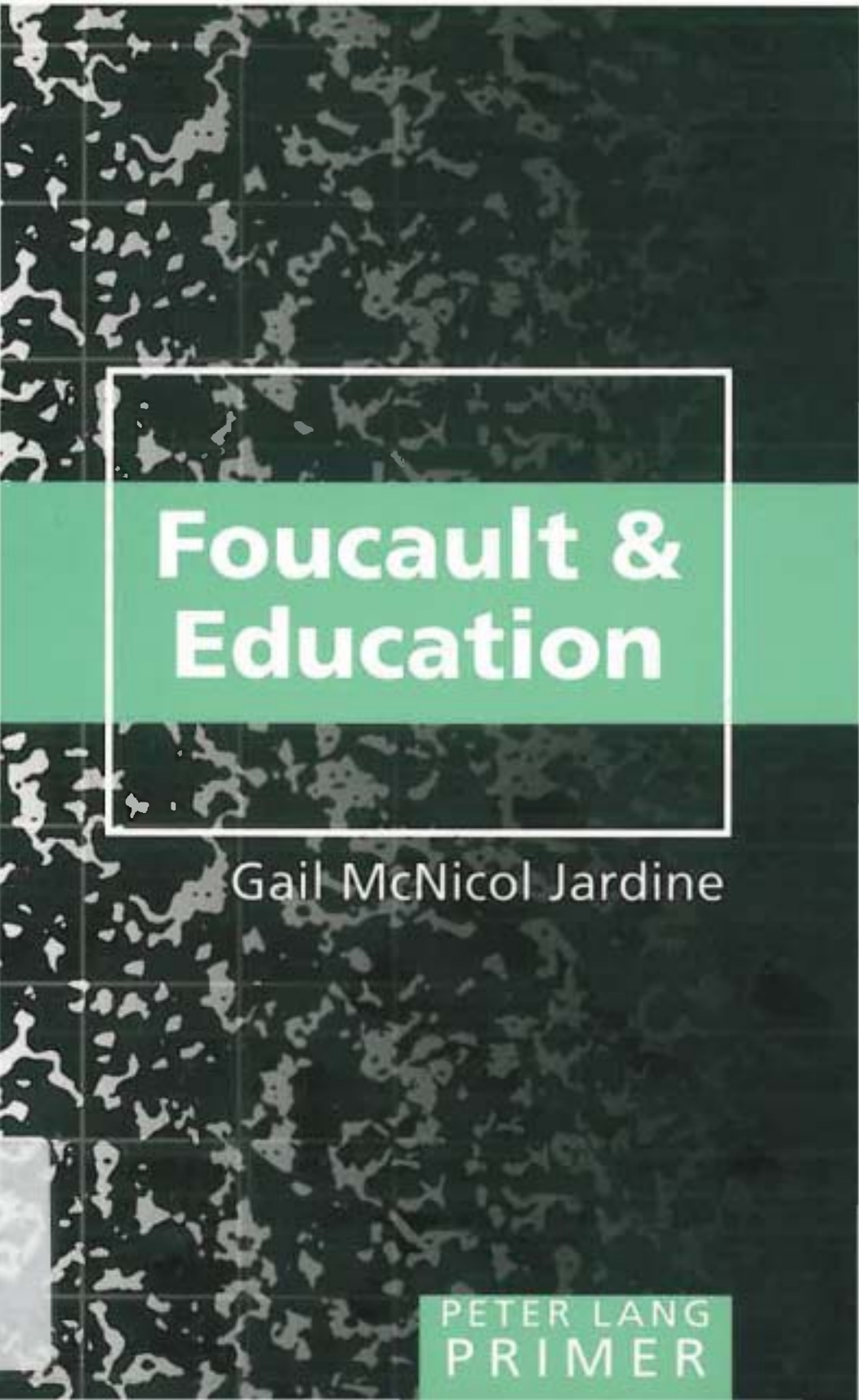
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Education
Gail McNicol Jardine
PETER LANG
PRIMER

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Foucault & Education

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Table of Contents

1 Introduction: How Can the Subject Tell the Truth about Itself? 1

2 Foucault's Analysis of Disciplinary Knowledge and Power . . 23

3 Foucault's Portrait of the Disciplinary Techniques We Use to Monitor, Classify, and Control 57

4 Foucault's Analysis of Systems of Human Knowledge and Its Repercussions for Education 77

5 Real Possibilities for Resistance and Struggle 113

References 123

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

How Can The Subject Tell The Truth About Itself?

In an interview entitled *Critical Theory/Intellectual History,* Michel Foucault (1926–1984) said:

> I wish to know how the **reflexivity of the subject** and the **discourse of truth** are linked—"How can the subject tell the truth about itself?" (1994, p. 128, emphasis added)

Reflexivity of the Subject
Refers to the fact that humans are self-conscious beings who can think about themselves.

Discourse of Truth
The body of knowledge that is held to be true in a particular era.

As educators, we certainly want to know this as well—for the sake of our students and ourselves. Is it possible to raise a fresh new voice in education, given how deeply each of us is already acculturated by modern society and its educational institutions?

Michel Foucault analyzed many aspects of modern Western societies, particularly those occurring in France in the 20th century. His works are significant and interesting to philosophers, historians, political scientists, and sociologists; his earliest works have been, at times, read and disavowed by psychiatrists. Foucault's analyses are also interesting to educators and students, as even a simple glance at the names of the topics he found important reveals: knowledge, discipline, power, normality and abnormality, the

examination, and so on. This Primer focuses on the insights, analytic tools, and topics from Foucault's work that are especially significant to educators who want both to understand the forces that underwrite much of our current educational theory and practice, and to change them.

Currently, many educators find it enormously difficult to believe in and act on the knowledge, truths, and practices that dominate our modern Western societies and educational institutions. Our own hearts, minds, spirits, and bodies, and those of our students, cry out that modern educational practices produce harmful and alienating effects that we should work together to undo. But can we do this in our roles as teachers and students? How thoroughly are we permeated and controlled by the discourses of modern Western societies and cultures? Whenever we wish to curtail what we see as the harmful and alienating effects of educational practices, to what degree are any possibilities that we can see still derived from, and still functioning within, the modern Western grid of knowledge, its expressions, and its practices? According to Foucault, we are thoroughly formed by the system of knowledge and power that we are born into and raised within—even our perceptions of what is around us are influenced by this. In *The Order of Things,* he wrote:

> I should like to know whether the subjects responsible for scientific discourse are not determined in their situation, their function, their perceptive capacity, and their practical possibilities by conditions that dominate and even overwhelm them. (2002, p. xiv)

Our Concerns as Educators and Students

As educators, we often seem to be in positions of terrific day-to-day power. We can help our students learn, or we can unintentionally hinder them. We can help them grow up into fulfilled, competent adults, or act in ways that undermine them. More specifically, we, as educators, get to say who is normal and who is not; we get to intervene in their lives

and require of them tasks that they may not wish to fulfill; we get to assess their knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and potentially we get to prevent them from "advancing" to the next grade.

And yet, at the same time, it often can feel like we do not have the power to teach what we think is vitally important for them to learn, nor can we teach them in the ways that would, in our professional judgment, be the most beneficial to them now and in the future.

As teachers, we too often see young children who are physically, mentally, and emotionally active—full of life, curiosity, wonder, creative ideas, questions, and deep feelings—enter school and become subdued once they become convinced that they must learn and be exactly what their teacher rewards them for learning and becoming. Once in school, children may not be allowed to be active when their body leads them to be, but only on the schedule that their teacher allows or on the school's schedule of gymnasium availability. Moreover, we name their bodily restlessness as "misbehavior" and attempt to redirect such students through acts of discipline, punishment, redirection, labeling, categorizing, and so on. Students too often learn that *their* curiosity and wonder, *their* ability to understand what is fair and not fair, kind and not kind, interesting and not interesting, is faulty. They learn to doubt themselves and become alienated from themselves. But, if they have complied successfully, they may now be A students. Parallel to this is a similar phenomenon experienced by teachers: we find ourselves put in the position of being subjected to school and state-/provincial-level expectations which often do to us what we, in turn, are instructed to do to children. If we comply, we may become senior administrators.

If students (and teachers) do not comply with such matters, it is rarely the schools themselves that are put into question. Rather, students become assessed and diagnosed with one of the many educational syndromes and labels that psychology has coined. In fact, some teachers substitute such labels

for the far more difficult and intimate task of becoming acquainted with the child. Teachers who fail to follow the prescribed regimes of schooling become labeled as "unique" at best, and as incompetent troublemakers who must be either convinced of or bullied into conformity at worst. What kind of power do teachers really have to change anything?

McNicol Jardine (see P. G. Jardine, 2000) met with nine other educators over one school year to explore the tensions that they and their students were experiencing as they taught and learned together. These educators had all been previously influenced by the work of Doll (1993), Clifford and Friesen (2003), Palmer (1993), D. Jardine (2000), and Smith (1999). All were educators who took the need for the social construction of knowledge seriously and who wished to go beneath the surface of the "laundry list" of objectives mandated in their province's Programs of Study. They wanted to explore how curricular topics can be taken up with the students in ways that make a positive difference in the students' ability to live in rich and interesting ways with others, and to teach in ways that will help each child walk home experiencing their world differently because of what they learned in school that day. These teachers often referred to themselves as generative educators.

In this study, the group of teachers expressed their worries about their students and the modernist pressures affecting them:

- The large amounts of time and energy that the students seem to invest in consuming all the right things, rather than being the most fulfilled by exploring, learning, and creating from their own being. (Jardine, 2000)
- Their students acting in ways that increase their own and each other's sense of being isolated individuals who must compete with one another, rather than to help build a caring community (Bellah et al., 1996; Noddings, 2003)
- Serious, even life-threatening effects that modern technology and over-consumption is having on the health of Earth and all life on it, rather

than critically examining alternative values and practices. (Rischard, 2002)

- Some students fatalistically accepting the shortcomings of our society because they feel that "no one has the power to do anything any differently anyway, so why try?" rather than feeling a sense of agency that they want to act upon to help create a world where we all live well with one another on Earth.
- Constant high tension, namely, the effects we believe our decision has on our students each time we must choose to skim over helping our students learn in meaningful ways in order to teach so that our students will be well prepared and able to achieve high scores on their standardized provincial achievement tests. (P. G. Jardine, 2000)

All of the teachers in McNicol Jardine's study tried to teach in ways that protect the students from the negative effects that these five areas of tension can have. Two teachers, Yvonne and Cordelia, found the words to express what all the educators in this study were trying to do:

> YVONNE: We're trying to carve out a place in our classroom that's a little Camelot, in which the ethics and code are different from the rest of society.
>
> CORDELIA: One which allows us all to be deeply human. (P. G. Jardine, 2000)

But creating a Camelot leaves us unsatisfied. We do not want to create a dream—no matter how beautiful. We want to actually change what we pay attention to, what we value, and what we do, in our modern societies. As educators, we want to learn more about what we need to know and do, what we need to learn and teach, so that we can live well with all other life. We need to critique modernist Western knowledge and practices and create new possibilities that respond to this task of learning to live together on Earth.

At the beginning of the 21_{st} century, many educators in modern Western countries understand that

they (and we!) need enormous power if they are to do right by each and every one of their students; and yet often we feel enormously powerless. At first glance, Foucault's stance does not seem to help this situation; he describes a conception of power that both preexists our own personal histories and has enormous power to mold our ideas, practices, and possibilities:

> For a long time, the great problem was how it was possible for the will of individuals to be represented in or by the general will. Nowadays the same thematic is evoked in the oft-repeated statement that fathers, husbands, employers, teachers all represent a state power which itself "represents" the interests of a class. This takes no account of the complexity of the mechanisms at work, their specificity, nor the effects of inter-dependence, complementarity, and sometimes of blockage, which this very diversity produces.
>
> In general terms, I believe that power is not built up out of "wills" (individual or collective), nor is it derivable from interests. Power is constructed and functions on the basis of particular powers, myriad issues, myriad effects of power. It is this complex domain that must be studied. (1980, p. 188)

The Goal of This Primer

In this Primer, I will argue that Foucault's historical and philosophical analyses can help us a great deal with the double task of critiquing modern Western societies and their educational institutions, and creating new possibilities for living well on Earth with all other life. His analyses can help all of us learn more about the unintended effects of standardized curricula, standardized testing, prescriptive teaching, and manipulative classroom management programs. His writings can help generative educators understand what it is that we (consciously or unconsciously) react to so negatively and emotionally whenever we are required to engage in standardized, prescriptive teaching, even when this forces us to overlook the needs and individualities of the students facing us. In a world where each per-

son is increasingly involved in daily intercultural communication, Foucault's analyses of the nature of knowledge also proves helpful.

Foucault helps us understand more about the nature of what each era constitutes as its system of knowledge and power. By learning more about these systems and the historical transformations they have undergone throughout European history, we will learn about what we need to do if we are to succeed in transforming educational institutions and policies towards a greater understanding of how we might live well on Earth together, with all other life.

Foucault's Analyses

Foucault granted many interviews in which he offered to clarify his analyses. In the following two passages, he spoke of the overriding questions and areas of concern that drove his lifelong search for how we may tell the truth to ourselves in our lives:

> Our civilization has developed the most complex system of knowledge, the most sophisticated structures of power: what has this kind of knowledge, this type of power made of us? In what way are those fundamental experiences of madness, suffering, death, crime, desire, individuality connected, even if we are not aware of it, with knowledge and power? I am sure I'll never get the answer; but that does not mean that we don't have to ask the question. (1990, p. 71)
>
> I tried to locate three major types of problems: the problem of truth, the problem of power, and the problem of individual conduct. (p. 243)

Disciplining
Techniques or effects that are used to train an individual.

Normalizing
Judgments and techniques (such as rewards and punishments) used to classify individuals according to a standard or norm.

In his writings, Foucault chafed against many of the things that all educators who care about children and issues of social justice also confront with dismay and anger. His work can help us identify and mitigate the effects of these phenomena. His investigations can help us see that even in a simple example of a young child's restlessness there is a great and often long-standing detail and history at work. The student is right to feel the **disciplining**, *objectifying*, and **normalizing** effects of certain educational practices that have their origin in the field of modern

knowledge and power, even if as teachers we do not intend to use them to produce such effects.

Foucault was sensitive to anything that might interfere with his unconstrained ability to be himself, and he was extremely successful in identifying many forms of such constraint. He was determined not to feel pressure to become what other people, other institutions in society, or other systems of knowledge and power told him he should become. His response was to engage in and publish round after round of investigations, analyses, and critiques of disciplining forces of all kinds. He explored those beliefs, expectations, values, and practices in modern Western societies that not only dictate what we should say, do, feel, value, and think, but also those that reward or punish us as individuals when we fail to comply with the standards built into them. "My main concern will be to locate the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous individual modes of behavior" (Foucault, 1990a, p. 11).

In his experiences working with mental patients, prisoners, homosexuals, and Marxists (Miller, 1994), Foucault saw how devastating the effects of such disciplining forces can be on individual human beings. He urged us all to identify and fight the forces that turn us away from our own rich life experiences and instead bring about our own objectification (Foucault, 1979; see also Foucault, 1983, p. 211). Foucault insisted that we must be continually and carefully vigilant about the effects on us of everything we participate in, so that we may be able to undo the **objectifying**, controlling effects exerted by the operation of acts of knowledge and power in modernist, Western, normalizing, disciplining societies. "At every moment, step by step," Foucault remarked in 1983, "one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing, with what one is" (Miller, 1994, p. 9). In this introduction, I will now briefly characterize some of the most important of Foucault's arguments for educators that we will explore in this Primer.

Objectifying
Techniques or effects that take away individuals' ability to choose for themselves, and which turn them into an object known and controlled by others.

Foucault has given us many helpful insights and analytic tools to help us remember that those things which we most take for granted in our society and educational spaces as utterly obvious, necessary, natural, normal, or inevitable are not necessarily so, but are rather the result of human decisions that could have been made otherwise. For example, the acts of power and knowledge that govern our expectations about students' abilities and behaviors are characterizations unique to the modern Western system of knowledge—even though this way of thinking is so entrenched that it is almost impossible for most of us to imagine how else a child could be approached. When we think, for example, of a child in our class as not being "up to the norm" that we expect a Grade 2 child to demonstrate, we must remember that this is not simply a description of a state of affairs in the world but the result of a normalizing set of actions which we have either consciously or unconsciously enacted. Foucault's analytic techniques can also deepen our ability to make repeated, careful, open-minded examinations of how we are affected by the cultural choices which prevail in our society in our everyday lives. These choices determine both what we think we know about the world as well as what forms and displays of power we judge to be legitimate in our society.

This is not as abstract as it seems. Simply put, in the 21st century we can legitimately name that Grade 2 child as suffering from some form of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, but we can no longer call him "willful" as would have been a commonplace category a hundred years ago (or, before that, "possessed" or "devilish"). We also cannot refer to this child as "full of life" or "bound to do well" as might occur in a culture very different from our own.

Foucault also gives us a clear portrait of the particular techniques of knowledge and power that our modernist, Western societies have chosen to exert. He developed a detailed, though unsystem-

atic, critique of many kinds of authorities. In scattered bits and pieces he describes, gives examples of, and condemns the myriad techniques that are used in our society with the intention of turning each individual into a socially desirable object for others and even for ourselves (a perfectly terrifying, but desperately important way to imagine what the implicit aims of education might be). He refers to these as ***disciplinary* knowledge** and ***disciplinary* acts of power**. I believe that the disciplinary forces that Foucault describes are a major source of the pressures we teachers feel to transmit knowledge even when we understand it is being learned inertly by our students; to continue to teach both content and processes that isolate, rather than connect, our students to all other life on Earth; and to otherwise standardize teaching, learning, class management, the curriculum, and assessment.

Disciplinary Acts of Power
A set of modern Western techniques used to train an individual; examples include examination and surveillance.

Disciplinary Knowledge
Modern Western knowledge used to monitor, classify, and control individuals.

In his writings, Foucault not only challenges us to examine our understanding of our practices and our own acts of power and their effects. He also can help us investigate:

- How knowledge is humanly **constituted** in conjunction with those interested in using the knowledge to increase their own power
- The creation of modern Western knowledge and all other systems of human knowledge as a **grid of intelligibility** that contains all of the concepts, objects, techniques, and strategies for knowing in any given era
- What the nature, or status, is of the knowledge in the mandated curriculum that we require students to learn if they are to be successful in our society
- How systems of knowledge through European history are not related as increasingly accurate steps in a progressive series with our own knowledge at the pinnacle, but as single, individual alternatives to one another
- That this understanding is valuable to acknowledge when we are engaged in intercultural communication

Constituted
Constructed or formulated by human beings.

Grid of Intelligibility
The framework in which elements of knowledge of an era are arranged.

- That systems of knowledge and power have changed before and can change again.

Truth, or a system of knowledge to use Foucault's terminology, is different than power, but is always tightly intertwined with it in finely braided ways:

> Truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has a regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

Foucault has provided us with perceptive and insightful analyses of many acts of knowledge and power that can interfere with our ability to freely explore how we may live within truth, rather than inside a prison made from our own culture and society. Yet, at the same time, he denies in the above passage that we are ever in a state where we can arrive at knowledge or truth "[as] the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves" (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Does this mean that Foucault denies that young children can enter school with their ability to be receptive to what is around them, and their ability to respond spontaneously using their own hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits, brimful and overflowing with their own questions and explanations? As an early-childhood educator, I have seen children like this before they enter school and in the early grades.

Reading Foucault, we increase our understanding of what mysteries and challenges, possibilities and impossibilities, are involved in attempting to live in

ways that are "true to ourselves," while we use the preestablished language and cultural and social constructions of our culture to do so. In this Primer, I will explore the potential of Foucault's analyses for revealing how we may dismantle the prisons that our modern, Western systems of knowledge and power confine us in and create anew. Foucault documents that system of knowledge and power can change—because they have been transformed several times throughout history. There is also the presence of **marginalized voices** and wisdom that we in modern societies *could* decide to grant the power to articulate what we would be willing to accept as knowledge. Foucault's analyses may be able to help us identify many things that present themselves as necessary facts, but which not only *could* be otherwise, but quite possibly *should* be otherwise, for the sake of all life on Earth.

Marginalized Voices
An expression of how some people's experiences are put on the margins of society.

Michel Foucault (1926–1984)

Michel Foucault and his works often elicit contradictory reactions from his readers. In his books, articles, lectures, and interviews, he seems to be:

- Analytic and revealing, but also masked
- A questioner, yet one who gives many answers
- A tease, but deadly serious
- Enigmatic, obscure, and private, yet someone who readily gave interviews to clarify his intentions and ideas
- Admired, but also maligned
- A difficult read, yet providing analyses that have both a mathematician's and a poet's simplicity and elegance.

Even in interviews, Foucault was extremely reticent to provide details of his own life, whether as a child or as an adult. Nevertheless, it is important to know that Michel Foucault was a philosopher/historian/critic from the 20th century who grew up and lived as an adult within our own modern, Western European traditions, systems of thought, and systems of power/governance.

Foucault was born in 1926, the son of a surgeon, in Poitiers, France. Always very intelligent, he was the object of teasing by other children who would make fun of his name and his shortsightedness (Horrocks & Jevtic, 2000). (As an aside, it is interesting for educators to note that the work talked about in this Primer was produced by someone who was bullied.) Foucault and his brother and sister grew up in the years between World War I and II. It was a time when European Fascists and Nazis were successfully increasing their ability to sort their fellow citizens into categories of good or bad, increasingly acting on their official desire to control the beliefs, actions, and fate of each individual in their societies. Foucault once stated that he expected that all children in those circumstances of war were affected by it—how could they not be, when war was waged on their doorsteps? But, being an educator who is always on the watch for the interests each child repeatedly and passionately returns to, I find it interesting that Foucault said in an interview, "What strikes me now when I try to recall those impressions [while I was growing up] is that nearly all the great emotional memories I have are related to the political situation" (Foucault, 1990, p. 6). During his life, Foucault was very active working within social action groups to improve the lot of prisoners, Algerian citizens, and to some extent homosexuals.

Foucault received a university education in France during the 1960s when academic thought was preoccupied with the writings of Hegelians such as Koyre, Marx, Freud, Husserl and other phenomenologists, Habermas and the Frankfurt School, and Nietzsche. Foucault studied each of these philosophers. He frequently stated that rather than talking extensively *about* Nietzsche's work, he used Nietzsche's ideas as analytic tools to think *with* (Foucault, 1990, pp. 17–46). He was interested in trying to grasp the essential ways of thinking that permeated other, historical European cultures and societies. He also researched and wrote about the ideas of the Pythagoreans, Plato, Aristotle, and the

Hellenistic philosophers (the Cynics, Epicureans and Stoics). He analyzed dossiers of legal and medical documents from the Middle Ages through the present day.

As Foucault carried out his historical and philosophical analyses as well as his work for social action taken on behalf of prisoners, against colonialism in Algeria, and for the right to speak and choose one's sexuality freely, he turned his critical eye and mind to contemporary events occurring in his own present. He was devoted to using analytical concepts and tools to reveal what was afoot in contemporary events, to identify the conditions under which they were emerging, and to identify what was guiding them from below. He described many ways that our modern Western regime of knowledge and power exerts multiple effects on us and on our possibilities for living, because of how well they objectify, normalize and control us.

In an 1980 interview with the editors of the journal *Hérodote*, Foucault stated:

> If one is interested in doing historical work that has political meaning, utility and effectiveness, then this is possible only if one has some kind of involvement with the struggles taking place in the area in question. I tried first to do a **genealogy** of psychiatry because I had a certain amount of practical experience in psychiatric hospitals and was aware of the combats, the lines of force, tensions and points of collision which existed there. My historical work was undertaken only as a function of those conflicts. The problem and the stake here was the possibility of a discourse which would be both true and strategically effective, the possibility of a historical truth which could have a political effect. (p. 64)

Genealogy
Foucault's term for the investigation of the meanings of a concept through history into our own time. Both scholarly knowledge and marginalized voices are investigated. A genealogy is carried out because the concept is involved in a current controversy.

From the beginnings of his published works in 1961 to the last interview he gave in 1984, Foucault searched for answers to current conflicts that he was involved in and cared passionately about. His analyses were always for the sake of something, for the sake of phenomenon he cared about deeply (Foucault, 1980, p. 64). His work was creative. He tol-

erated ambiguity while continually striving to understand and articulate what was chafing him.

From 1971 until 1984, Foucault was an academic at the College de France. As such, he was responsible for giving public lectures for 26 hours a year. The rest of the time, he was able to pursue his research (Foucault, 2003, pp. ix–xiii). Foucault worked meticulously, in both historical and philosophical ways. To understand any another system of knowledge and power, Foucault would gather documents from that period. He would patiently and meticulously examine in detail "material documentation (books, texts, accounts, registers, acts, buildings, institutions, laws, techniques, objects, customs, etc.) that exists in every time and place, in every society, either in a spontaneous or in a consciously organized form" (Foucault, 2001, p. 7). In *Pierre Riviere, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother . . .* we have an example of the kind of documentation Foucault gathered and how long he would analyze it. In this case, he analyzed the documents for more than one year in his attempt to "study the practical aspects of the relations between psychiatry and criminal justice" (Foucault, 1982, p. vii).

Foucault's analytic framework of insights and critical apparatuses or tools took him a lifetime to build. His earlier work investigated the nature of systems of knowledge, which he only implicitly recognized were politically created. He called the work he did to characterize an historical system of knowledge **archeology**. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Foucault analyzed how systems of knowledge and regimes of power work together to produce the demands of daily life on individuals in modern society. He investigated power's **capillary actions** on individuals. When he undertook a historical description of how power infused a certain concept over time, in Foucault's terminology, he was creating a genealogy. Only in his later work, around 1984, did Foucault begin to explicitly articulate that his efforts had always been directed, not simply at negative critiques of various regimes of knowledge and power,

Archeology
Foucault's term for the analysis of a systematic body of knowledge and power.

Capillary Actions
The point at which acts of power and systems of knowledge that are dominant in a society impact the individual.

but also *toward* understanding how one forms their own self-identity while nonetheless being affected by such systems and regimes (Foucault, 1990, pp. 14, 71, 154–56).

In spite of his acute and articulate powers of critique on issues and events he cared passionately about, Foucault (1997, p. 111) did not wish to engage in any polemical debates. He explained that his own intent to explore truth while respecting the rights of others was at cross-purposes to polemics because

> Polemics defines alliances, recruits partisans, unites interests or opinions, represents a party; it establishes the other as an enemy, an upholder of opposed interests against which one must fight until the moment this enemy is defeated and either surrenders or disappears . . . One gesticulates: anathemas, excommunications, condemnations, battles, victories, and defeats are no more than ways of speaking, after all. And yet, in the order of discourse, they are also ways of acting which are not without consequence. There are the sterilizing effects. Has anyone ever seen a new idea come out of a polemic? . . . But it is really dangerous to make anyone believe that he can gain access to the truth by such paths and thus to validate, even if in a merely symbolic form, the real political practices that could be warranted by it. (Foucault, 1997, pp. 112–113)

A Brief Overview of Foucault's Major Publications

(Although I give the publication dates of the English editions cited throughout the Primer, in this overview I will provide the dates Foucault originally published each book in French.) Foucault's experiences as a student of psychology working and studying in a mental hospital, when he did not belong either to the group of patients nor to the group of psychiatrists that treated them, helped him experience the "slipperiness" of the concepts that were used by each group to describe madness. He shares his analysis of the meanings of madness in *Madness and Civilization* (1961) and *Mental Illness and Psychology* (1962). With a lifelong interest in politi-

cal events, Foucault also focused on the differences appearing in the relationships of power between patients and psychiatrists. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), he traced the steps in the creation of the clinical method and described how psychiatrists created the knowledge and power that enabled them to demonstrate to society that they could know more than their patients about madness, and know if someone was mentally unstable and therefore dangerous, before the person could know it him- or herself. Through his historical and philosophical work, Foucault came to argue that ideas, understandings, and the ownership of power all change from society to society, from culture to culture.

Foucault continued his explorations by analyzing two bodies of knowledge separated by time in Western European history. In *The Order of Things* (1966), he examined and compared the nature of knowledge in the 16th and 18th centuries, and described how very differently language, life, and the economy were understood and lived within in each era.

In *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969), Foucault focused on explicitly isolating and describing the framework that he used only implicitly in his three earlier books. He presented a system of interrelated concepts that are useful for understanding any system of knowledge, from any time and any culture; not by reinterpreting it according to what we understand in our culture, but by attempting to understand it on its own terms. Terminology proliferates in this small volume. Some of the terminology Foucault continued to use in his later analyses; other terms were used only here. Nevertheless, when we use the analytic framework that Foucault developed in *The Archeology of Knowledge,* we can see for ourselves not only how different two systems of knowledge (whether separated temporally or spatially) can be; we can also see what we need to target to change our own system of knowledge and power.

We can gain a vitally important set of understandings from *The Archeology of Knowledge.* Modern Western knowledge is not the pinnacle of rationality

and knowledge towards which all previous societies have been developing. We do not necessarily think in the ways human beings from other times or other cultures do, and vice versa. Every system of knowledge is different, but equal, in its completeness and coherence. These insights are crucial to remember and use whenever we are engaged in intercultural communication.

In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Foucault also argued that part of understanding a system of knowledge involves identifying who is authorized to speak the knowledge, from what institutions, and with what force on others in their society. In the works Foucault published next, understanding how power is experienced (both when it is wielded and when a person is the target or object of power) becomes the focus. In his analyses here, Foucault demonstrated how knowledge and power act together to classify, monitor, and control the members of modern, Western disciplinary societies. We have access to Foucault's development of this analysis in these major publications:

- *Pierre Riviere, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother . . .* (1973)
- *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France* 1974–1975
- *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975)
- *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France* 1975–1976
- *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1* (1976)
- *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* 1972–1977

Foucault's analysis helps his readers to identify and undo many of the effects of disciplinary knowledge and techniques. However, freeing ourselves from these effects and feeling free to be ourselves are two different tasks. During the last few years of his life, Foucault began to explicitly acknowledge that the concern behind his analyses was to explore the relationships between how an individual can decide

his or her own proper conduct and the regime of knowledge and power within which they have been acculturated—"how can the subject tell the truth about itself?" (Foucault, 1994, p. 128). Foucault calls working out one's own conduct carefully and ethically **care of the self**. Several later publications explored the problems and approaches that have been offered throughout the history of Europe regarding how to determine and guide our own self-conduct ethically. These publications are:

Care of the Self
A phrase used by Foucault to refer to all techniques for determining your own individual ethical conduct.

- *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984*
- *Fearless Speech* (1983)
- *On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress* (1983)
- *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality, Volume 2* (1984)
- *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality, Volume 3* (1984)

In the Chapters Ahead

While I present the major analytic concepts and tools from Foucault's writings that are most useful to educators in the rest of this Primer, I also take up the questions: *How can we tell the truth about ourselves, given how thoroughly we are acculturated into preexisting systems of knowledge and power—such as the ones we experience in the modern, Western regime? Is it possible to raise a fresh new voice in education, given how deeply each of us is already acculturated by modern societies and their educational institutions? How can Foucault's analytic concepts and tools help educators to transform current educational practices that we judge to be harmful and alienating?*

In Chapters 2 and 3, I present Foucault's critique of the 19th and 20th centuries' modern Western system of knowledge and acts of power and their capillary effects on individuals in their daily lives, and provide specific examples of educators' current use of disciplinary power and knowledge in schools. I discuss how thoroughly the objects and relationships

that we experience, what we perceive about each one, and what we imagine we can and cannot do, stem from our acculturation in modern disciplinary acts of knowledge and power. It is a system of knowledge and power that tries to turn us into the objects needed for a modern society; that acts to form and mold each of us, that sets **discursive** and **nondiscursive** ideas, expectations, values, and practices into play, leaving us with the sense of each being continually monitored, compared, classified, and judged in relation to disciplinary categories of the normal and the abnormal. It is a system in which we are all classified, rewarded, punished, and ultimately controlled. Many of the techniques that Foucault identified that act to monitor, classify, normalize, and control each of us in our daily lives are then described.

Discursive
Everything verbal.

Nondiscursive
Artifacts and practices.

In Chapter 4 I present Foucault's argument that systems of knowledge are discreet, singular, and individualized, not progressive steps in an ever-improving series. I also describe the many useful tools Foucault developed for characterizing the nature of any single system of knowledge, and investigate his analysis on how systems transform from one form into another, completely different one. This analysis and its associated terminology, developed in *The Archeology of Knowledge,* are introduced in this chapter along with a rationale for the number and length of passages that I cite in Chapters 2 to 5 of this Primer. I also explore the concept of "resemblance" as an example of archeology, and demonstrate how Foucault's analysis can lead us to understand an element of knowledge which appears in both our modern system of knowledge and that of the 17th century in two distinctly different ways.

In Chapter 5, I again consider the set of pedagogical questions raised by Foucault's work: *Given his historical and philosophical analyses, how is it possible to transform the modern, Western, disciplinary system of knowledge and power that acts so pervasively in our educational institutions to objectify and mold us in our individual lives? Is it possible for us to "un-think" and begin to "un-experience" our modern, disciplinary ways?*

How can we tell the truth about ourselves, given how thoroughly we are acculturated into the preexisting, modern Western system of knowledge and power? Is it possible to raise a fresh new voice in education, given how deeply each of us is already acculturated by modern societies and their educational institutions? How can Foucault's analytic concepts and tools help educators and students to transform current educational practices that we judge to be harmful and alienating?

At first glance, there is little guidance in Foucault's work to help us transform our own system of knowledge and power. Foucault worked backwards, examining documents from the past in order to identify how specific acts of knowledge and/or power morphed from one system to another. He was not interested in the human agents or discoveries that history sometimes credits with each impetus to change, but in how the meaning of each specific use of a concept changed (2002, pp. xiii–xiv).

However, Foucault also recognized that where power is exerted, there is struggle and resistance—otherwise, it is a case of obedience (1980, pp. 81–83). He identified knowledgeable people (inmates in prisons, patients in mental hospitals, etc.) whose voices we refuse to listen to even though we want to understand them. Foucault referred to such voices as possessing "subjugated knowledges." In addition, he identified knowledge of specific elements of historical systems of knowledge and power, and of systems of knowledge and power from other cultures, also as subjugated knowledges.

Foucault dreamed of vastly increased conversations between multiple and differentiated voices (Foucault, 1990, pp. 328–30). In his own formulation of respectful and ethical conversations between persons, he understood and acted on the need to approach other people in an honest attempt to understand what they believe, mean, value, and expect. In curiosity and conversation he saw hope for change.

GLOSSARY

Archeology: Foucault's term for the analysis of a systematic body of knowledge and power.

Capillary Actions: The point at which acts of power and systems of knowledge that are dominant in a society impact the individual.

Care of the Self: A phrase used by Foucault to refer to all techniques for determining your own individual ethical conduct.

Constituted: Constructed or formulated by human beings.

Disciplinary Acts of Power: A a set of modern Western techniques used to train an individual; examples include examination and surveillance.

Disciplinary Knowledge: Modern Western knowledge used to monitor, classify, and control individuals.

Disciplining: Techniques or effects that are used to train an individual.

Discourse of Truth: The body of knowledge that is held to be true in a particular era.

Discursive: Everything verbal.

Genealogy: Foucault's term for the investigation of the meanings of a concept through history into our own time. Both scholarly knowledge and marginalized voices are investigated. A genealogy is carried out because the concept is involved in a current controversy.

Grid of Intelligibility: The framework in which elements of knowledge of an era are arranged.

Marginalized Voices: An expression of how some people's experiences are put on the margins of society.

Nondiscursive: Artifacts and practices.

Normalizing: Judgments and techniques (such as rewards and punishments) used to classify individuals according to a standard or norm.

Objectifying: Techniques or effects that take away individuals' ability to choose for themselves, and which turn them into an object known and controlled by others.

Reflexivity of the Subject: Refers to the fact that humans are self-conscious beings who can think about themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

Foucault's Analysis of Disciplinary Knowledge and Power

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present Michel Foucault's analysis of the beliefs, values, expectations and practices of modernist society—particularly in relation to medical, psychological, legal, and educational institutions. His analyses of disciplinary knowledge and power focus on issues of the classification, monitoring, control, reward, punishment, and normalization of individuals. Even a cursory glance at this list makes it obvious how vital such analyses might be for educators, since our profession is rife with such issues, mixed as they are with equally volatile and contested concerns such assessment, accountability, classroom management, and the like. Such matters are of deep and abiding interest to educators. For some educators, these issues define a great area of familiarity in which education—both our thoughts and beliefs about it and the language in which we speak—seems to be stuck.

Foucault's analyses can help us learn more about some unintended effects of standardized curricula,

standardized testing, prescriptive teaching, and manipulative classroom management. His critique can help educators, particularly those who take generative approaches to teaching and learning, to understand what it is we consciously or unconsciously react to so negatively and emotionally whenever we are required to engage in standardized, prescriptive teaching, and in particular when this forces us to overlook the needs and the individuality of the students facing us. But there is a deeper issue here that is equally important. Any regime of disciplinary power and knowledge brings with it the power to frame the nature of the *alternatives* to that regime that we can imagine. When we suggest that seeing through the strictures of disciplinary power and knowledge might help us nurture the individual child's receptivity and responsiveness to the world, it is precisely our immersion in this regime of disciplinary power and knowledge that often makes such language seem romantic. Foucault's analysis does not especially help us understand what we as educators might do *instead* of falling prey to disciplinary power and knowledge. I will explore this in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Disciplining Power

Foucault focuses on those forms of knowledge and techniques of power that serve to discipline and train human beings and, in doing so, turns them into the sorts of objects which society needs. To the extent that disciplining power is successful, we become (wittingly or not) complicit in its continuance and maintenance. This disciplining occurs through the exercise of classification, surveillance, normalization, reward, and punishment—all terms which are desperately familiar to educators. We shall see that the insinuation of discipline into the life of an educator is pervasive: classroom discipline and management, the dividing up of **disciplines** of knowledge in the curriculum, and the disciplining and ordering effects of practices of normality and abnormality are just three initial points which make

Disciplines
Areas of study. In particular, Foucault was interested in the human sciences (sociology, psychology, psychiatry, criminology, medicine and biology) insofar as they had a disciplining effect on how we understand ourselves as individuals.

Foucault's work profoundly important to and disturbing for educators. It is disturbing especially because, as we shall see, the depth of our complicity as educators in such matters cannot be measured by our explicit compliance or our good intentions and aspirations.

Foucault explains how disciplinary knowledge and power began in Western societies. It was at:

> the moment where it became understood that it was more efficient and profitable in terms of the economy of power to place people under surveillance than to subject them to some extraordinary penalty. This moment in time corresponds to the formation, gradual in some respects and rapid in others, of a new mode of exercise of power in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking . . . of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. The eighteenth century invented, so to speak, a synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise *within* the social body, rather than *from above* it. (1980, pp. 38–39)

Foucault turned his powers of observation and his analytic and critical abilities onto these disciplining forces that affect us individually. These include the beliefs, expectations, values, and practices which not only dictate what we should say, do, feel, value, and think, but reward or punish us when we fail to comply with the standards built into them.

We like to think, however, that knowledge and power are not necessarily intertwined in this way, that knowledge is somehow independent of and "above" this fray. When our students explore a curriculum topic with great vigor and determination, we like to think that the ensuing knowledge is free of such matters. However, as Foucault claimed, "the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (1980, p. 52). He made it clear that this is not a matter of power having "a need for such-and-such a discovery" and thereby producing the

discoveries it desires. Rather, the process is more profound than this: "the new exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information." (p. 51). For example, the desire to more carefully monitor and classify children's "developmental needs" gave rise to a whole new "object of knowledge" to be explored, new "bodies of information" What then occurs is that the newly discovered "facts" about children provide the rationale for more carefully monitoring their development, and the exercise of power over children's lives that gave rise to the "facts" that provide this rationale disappears from view. It appears as if this is just "the way things are with children" (rather than an exercise in our ability to control, predict, and manipulate them).

> My main concern [is] to locate the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous individual modes of behavior. (Foucault, 1990a, p. 11)

Foucault insisted that we must be continually and carefully vigilant about the effects of everything in which we participate, in order to undo the objectifying, controlling effects exerted by the operation of knowledge and acts of power in modernist, Western, normalizing, disciplining societies.

Foucault's Analytic Tools

Good teachers observe their students constantly. We "kidwatch" (Duckworth, 1987) and reflect on what we have seen and heard to gain insight into what is really happening to each student, and therefore to understand what we must reexamine and revise if our teaching is to be effective. The analytic tools that Foucault recommends we use to understand the controlling forces in society, which I describe below, are immediately appealing to teachers because they are so similar to the analytic techniques we use each day. If such tools can help us identify forces at work in our classrooms, they show promise of being able to be just as helpful in identifying the forces in

society that we judge have negative effects—and at helping us to articulate why we should replace them with practices based on other, less disciplining and controlling, beliefs and values.

New and Different Understandings and Actions Are Always Possible

Foucault urged us to free our imaginations regarding what is necessary or not in our social institutions, such as schools, jails, and hospitals—all places in which normalizing, disciplining power is exercised. He suggested that we can free ourselves from the prevailing, assumed accounts we have been taught about the value of our social practices, goals, values, and expectations. One way to discover what activities, ideas and values are contingent and arbitrary, and which therefore can be reformed, is to analyze what people in other cultures have held as true and what they have done or not done because of the truths they held. As described in detail below, in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) Foucault analyzed the ways in which punishment of individuals for their crimes in medieval societies contrasts with modern attempts to punish/reform criminals and eliminate crime (see also Foucault, 1980, pp. 81–82; 1983, p. 209).

Listening to the truths of people who are marginalized in our 20th century world can also bring freedom to our thoughts and actions. Foucault called the truths expressed by such people "subjugated knowledges" and described their potential critical power this way:

> [They are] a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to the task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work. (1980, p. 82)

It is telling to note who Foucault considered to be part of such low ranks: "the psychiatric patient, the ill person, of the nurse, the delinquent, etc."

(p. 82). Those of us in education can easily add to this long list of disqualifications. As educators, we can certainly add young children in our own culture to this list of disqualified knowledges. We have all experienced the ways in which a young child's answer to a teacher's question becomes disqualified when it is not what the teacher already knows to be the answer. Such disqualification is profound, not only because it excludes the child's answer, but also because it demonstrates that what *appeared* to be a question on the part of a teacher was not a question *about the topic named in the question* but, in fact, a question about the qualification (or potential disqualification) of the student. This teaches students a terrible lesson: that it is their disqualification and our ability to determine what will count as qualification that is at issue in most classroom "conversations." They are, in fact, interrogations.

Using both historical and marginalized voices, we can reconstruct the history of the major acts of power and knowledge in our society and of the rules that justify them. In other words, we can construct a genealogy (Foucault, 1980, pp. 83, 117). Once we identify the genealogy that led to our current position (see Chapter 5 for a fuller description of Foucault's understanding of genealogy), we can understand how and why we are affected by power and knowledge as individual human beings in our society. Knowing this is the first step in deciding what we should change and what we should cherish and keep.

As educators, we are right to feel frustrated, threatened, and often powerless because we suspect that many institutional demands turn our desire to make teaching a deeply human relationship, centered on us and our students learning how to live well together on Earth, into an impossible task. Once we get a clearer understanding of the relationship between our own understandings and goals for good teaching and those embodied in our institutions, we are better able to choose when and why we will participate in these demands, and when it is our pro-

fessional and human responsibility to resist. Each of us must decide to what extent, and why, we are willing to be complicit in perpetuating this knowledge, these techniques of power, and their effects on the lives of our children—and ourselves.

We Must Demand Specific Descriptions of the Actual, Not Intended, Effects of Acts of Power

In Calgary, Alberta, the results of Provincial standardized tests are posted in the local newspaper, where schools are ranked in terms of their percentage scores that year. All of this is done with the intent of "parents' right to know" what is going on in their own schools. But when we look at the actual effects of this phenomenon, we find that schools in lower socioeconomic areas of the city are nearly always lower down the scale. We hear tales of teachers deliberately asking certain students in their classes to stay home on the day of the test. We hear of how the whole year's work becomes geared to "getting ready for the tests." We hear of how capable students sometimes freeze up during the tests and get read back to them that they do not actually know those things in which, before the test, they had understandable confidence. Teachers are reprimanded. Schedules are adjusted. The living character of particular disciplines are torn apart and doled out in ways suitable to training for the test. These are just a few of the *actual effects* of this exercise of disciplining power embedded in such standardized tests.

And when such matters are brought up by teachers, the answer from educational authorities is already foretold: "We need to be accountable. What do you want us to do, not check on how things are going in your school? What have you got to hide?" Unfortunately, common responses by teachers to such standardized testing are part of the very same logic they argue against. As a dominant discourse, arguments against such dominance often simply invert the logic that is at work, and produce romantic, subjectivistic, overly emotional pleas on behalf of the

preciousness of the individual child; pleas which, of course, operate within precisely the same disciplinary logic as their "alternative."

It is interesting to note how resonant this problem is with Foucault's description of "subjugated knowledges" mentioned above. If we imagine the intimate, day-to-day knowledge that a particular experienced teacher has of a student who has not fared well on the standardized tests, we see that what is at work here is "a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it" (1980, p. 82). Simply put, those in charge of standardized testing simply don't know what to do with the localized particular knowledge of an experienced teacher, other than to disqualify it as "subjective." And, once such disqualification is enacted, that localized knowledge becomes subjected to a "harshness" and a helplessness that is all too familiar to the classroom teacher.

This is where Foucault's work becomes helpful. He argued that we must "refuse the abstractions of economic and ideological state violence which ignore who we are individually, and also a refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition which determines who one is" (1983, p. 212). Foucault's passion was to describe the specific ways that power and knowledge are used to objectify the daily lives of individuals in modern societies (1980, p. 96; 1983, p. 223). Therefore, it is important to examine the effects of *specific* practices and expectations (1990a, p. 11; 1979, pp. 23, 28, 303; 1980, pp. 88, 123, 145, 164; 1983, pp. 223–24). Foucault recommended that analysis "should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanisms through which they operate, and the continual effects of these" (1980, p. 96). Educators can bear witness to how exhausting and debilitating any attempt to take issue with the general mechanisms of state regulation can be. We know at the outset that the local, sub-

jugated knowledge that we possess as experienced teachers has already been ruled out of court in any such debate. Instead, analysis

> should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions. Its paramount concern, in fact, should be with the point where power surmounts the rules of right which organize and delimit it and extends itself beyond them, invests itself in institutions, becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments and eventually even violent means of material intervention. . . . one should try to locate power at the extreme points of its exercise, where it is always less legal in character. (Foucault, 1980, pp. 96–97)

Foucault argued that we should also avoid treating all of the specific negative instances of a phenomenon as members of one general, essentially similar category. Engaging in this sort of generalization moves our focus away from the peculiarities of each specific instance and thereby weakens our ability to understand and eliminate it. It also makes it much easier for regimes of power to argue against and dissolve the energy of our concerns, since it is precisely a command over regulating generalities and rules that is the bastion of such regimes. Foucault (1980, pp. 136–37) referred to this as the fallacy of **universalizing dissolution**.

Universalizing Dissolution
The fallacy of overgeneralizing.

Foucault did not analyze written policies or examine philosophies for their practical implications. He was not interested in examining the *intended* effects of practices (Foucault, 1979, pp. 6–7, 23–24; 1983, p. 223). Stated intentions and *actual* effects often differ, and when they do it is the actual effects that matter in people's lives. More strongly put, it is in the actual effects in people's lives that we get a glimpse of the lived realities of policies and practices, rather than their feigned and often manipulated surface features. We need to avoid those exhausting—and in the end highly speculative—debates about why a Department or Ministry of Education works they way it does, why their bureaucrats are doing this or

that, what good they think these standardized curricula might have, and so on:

> Analysis should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision. Instead, it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. What is needed *is* a study of power at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there—where it installs itself and produces its real effects. Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors, etc. (1980, p. 97)

It is important to note that this level, the level at which power actually and specifically "installs itself and produces its real effects," is a level to which every teacher and every student has immediate access—right here, in the trembling of this child's hand over the test; in the actual language used to dismiss the file of lovely student work in favor of the test score; in the social and economic conditions of this school, these children; and so on.

But we need to be careful here. The regimes of power that have installed themselves into education at the level of its practices and discourse have given rise to weak and trivialized versions of "classroom stories" that keep in place precisely that which they are attempting to uncover. Foucault has alerted us: "who we are individually" is not quickly and easily available through merely emotive, anti-intellectual "teacher narratives," since regimes of power have already installed themselves therein. When we hear from a teacher that "all I can do is tell my own story," we have to recognize that this is *precisely* a *product* of a power regime. What more could you ask for in order for a regime of power to continue on unabated: teachers *feeling* empowered by telling each other their stories, while the structures of power

and their installation and insinuation continue uninterrupted.

We Must Identify the Prevented, As Well As the Present, Effects of Power

Foucault (1979, p. 23) warned us not to look merely for the negative, prohibitive, repressive effects of our society's practices and expectations, but also to identify their positive, productive effects; that is, not only to investigate what they cause, but *identify what they prevent or make unthinkable,* for these are productions as well. He also stressed the importance of looking beyond the elements directly involved in specific situations to identify wider effects in the functioning of society as a whole (Foucault 1979, pp. 277–78; 1980, pp. 40, 120–21).

Basic to Foucault's approach is the belief that if the existence of a practice/expectation/assumption/goal persists, then someone, somewhere, is benefiting in specific ways and we should investigate until we find out whom this is and how it happens. Foucault (1980) insisted that we need to look for the positive function of any practice as an integral and logical outcome of the social network to which it belongs, rather than assuming that an event that persists has arisen from merely idiosyncratic causes. If we do this, we avoid what he called "**historicist reductionism**," where practices are thought to have merely somehow just "happened" to be the way they are.

Historicist Reductionism
The fallacy of reducing the meaning of a historical term to a contemporary meaning, or vice versa.

This admonition suggests that educators need to answer such questions as these:

> In our educational institution, what (and whose) view of the world are we giving our students? Who is benefiting? Who is harmed? What knowledge about the world is absent, subjugated, disqualified? Why? How are the students related to each view?
>
> How do our students benefit from the way we teach them? How are they harmed? Specifically, who else benefits or is harmed? What else could we do here? Is our ability to imagine what else we might do itself insinuated in hidden regimes

> beyond our good intentions in raising such alternatives? What would the present and absent effects of these matters be? (p. 135–36)

We Must Avoid Being Blinded by Theoretical Expectations

Utopian Dissociation
The fallacy of considering an enforced idea independently of the actual places in which it has its effects.

Foucault (1980, p. 136) warned us to avoid "**utopian dissociations**" when we work to try to improve our society's activities. If we fall subject to this fallacy, we insist that *if only the true* theoretical framework could be instituted in society, all undesirable expectations and practices would vanish. Instead, Foucault insisted that we need to listen to the people who are the object of any given undesirable practice, and respect, take seriously, be responsive to, and support how and why they are resisting the practice. Utopian dissociation means that our efforts can too easily be literally "nowhere" (*hutopos,* "without place") and, as such, can be ineffectively abstract.

As educators, it is important to be mindful of the specific effects we actually observe our students experiencing. The effect here is subtle and pervasive. When students are having trouble with a task, it is too easy to leave the task itself unquestioned and find out what is wrong with the student that accounts for the failure or trouble at hand. For example, toward the end of the school year, a particular student's failure on a standardized exam is not able to be taken up as a comment *on the exam* but only as a comment *upon the student* and their knowledge skills and attitudes. The same mechanism appears when a school does poorly in its exam results. This is an example of utopian dissociation: the particular teacher, the particular student, the instructional practices, and so on are at fault in the failure, whereas the test itself in its grand, anonymous, "no-placeness" remains undisturbed. If only the teacher delivered the goods more effectively. If only the student had better learning skills, a better socioeconomic background (and on and on and on), everything would have been fine. Even the language here is vaguely utopian and abstract: once a troubled student is

objectified into "learning skills," their behavior can now be monitored and controlled, their skill level can be ranked, and strategic interventions can be mounted.

Foucault was aware that we must understand how groups of expectations and practices function synergistically at global, as well as local, levels. However, he scorned analysis that is theory-bound or even theory-driven. Much more in the tradition of grounded theory (see, for example, Strauss & Corbin, 1990), Foucault recommended that to understand how power and knowledge function in our society, we should begin by examining the most specific instances of their exercise (at the "micro" level), then give a very explicit and complete description of the mechanisms which coordinate specific acts of power and knowledge and allow them to work together synergistically at the "macro" level. In this way, our analysis consistently focuses upon real effects to identify the ways that local, direct effects and more global effects both increase and limit the possibilities for power at each level (Foucault 1990a, p. 100). Here is Foucault's own description of this approach:

> It is not that [any] global domination extends itself right to the base in a plurality of repercussions: I believe that the manner in which the phenomena, the techniques and the procedures of power enter into play at the most basic levels must be analyzed, that the way in which these procedures are displaced, extended and altered must certainly be demonstrated; but above all what must be shown is the manner in which they are invested and annexed by more global phenomena and the subtle fashion in which more general powers or economic interests are able to engage with these technologies that are at once both relatively autonomous of power and act as its infinitesimal elements. (1980, p. 99)

Foucault compeled us, then, to give up railing against, for example, the globalness of a call for "no child left behind" and look at the ways in which this invocation actually works itself out in demonstrable, local

ways. From here, from this intimate localness, we can *then* get a glimpse of the "more general power and economic interests" that are insinuated in such a call. Again, its general power and interest is not found in its declarative intent, but in its actual effects.

Foucault (1980) therefore recommended the bottom-up construction of general theories of society, not only because it was the specific effects of acts of power and knowledge that interested him, but also because he believed that facts can be found to fit any top-down theory—it depends merely upon the facts selected and how the regime of knowledge used in the selection fashions these facts as precisely those that confirm it. As mentioned above, acts of power create new objects for investigation and therefore perpetuate and confirm their own existence through the creation of the "facts" that are used in such confirmation. He demonstrated this sort of mechanism with reference to the position of those who attribute responsibility for the repression of infantile sexuality to attempts to establish and maintain the dominance of bourgeois values in society. To the extent that

> the human body had become essentially a force of production from the time of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, all the forms of its expenditure which did not lend themselves to the constitution of the productive forces—and were therefore exposed as redundant ["disqualified," as we detailed above]—were banned, excluded and repressed. (Foucault, 1980, p. 100)

The same sort of mechanisms and movements are widespread in schools. Those things—knowledges, bodily actions and desires, and so on—that do no lend themselves to the production of high grades on published standardized test results are "exposed as redundant." Long detailed conversations with children about some curricular topic become understood, under such a regime, as "frills" or "extras" and, when push comes to shove—when the standardized exams begin to loom—such things are banned, excluded, or repressed. And even when it can be

demonstrated that children who pursue such conversations actually achieve higher marks on the standardized exams, such practices remain excluded or marginalized because these practices themselves are not "understandable" within the standards' purview. Having these long conversations might be "nice," but the effectiveness of such classroom practices is not "normal" because it is not "normalizable." That is to say, the effectiveness with which such "frilly" practices can be guaranteed turns out to be, once again, a "particular, **local, regional knowledge**, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82). Since all teachers can't "do it," it is suspect, it isn't "normal."

Local, Regional Knowledge
Marginalized knowledge.

Foucault suggested that we should also mistrust global social theories because the effects of our strategies for power and our discourses are not necessarily constant from one situation to another. He referred to this as the rule of **continual variation of strategies** (Foucault, 1978, p. 99; 1983, pp. 223–s4) and the **tactical polyvalence of discourses** (Foucault, 1990a, pp. 100–2). For example, as educators we have to remember that talking about the uniqueness of each student is not a utopian statement, but a statement that fits somewhere, within a situation. Using as a floating, general term dissociated from its situation leads not only to misunderstanding but to an all-too-easy dismissal of what is being claimed. The language used by educators to give a voice to their concerns regarding regimes of power needs to be tactical, intelligent, thoughtful, and sensitive to the context in which we are speaking, the way our words can be understood, and the consequences of the tack we have taken.

Continual Variation of Strategies/The Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses
Effects of power (in the case of strategies) or knowledge (in the case of discourses) vary with their context.

As for variation in strategies, this reminds us that not all possible battles are worth pursuing in all possible contexts. Our strategies must not themselves be utopian and abstract, but must be fitting to the situations we find ourselves within. This is an old adage for those of us involved with that great area of utopian vision, student teaching. Be tactful, pick your battles, don't be theory-driven, and don't let

overgeneralized principles blind you to what is right in front of you.

Finally, Foucault gave us one other caveat regarding our use of theories. He explained that we need to ask what it is in any body of knowledge that is leading to a specific practice, rather than conclude that it is occurring as a result of people's theoretical misinterpretations and thereby fail to reexamine the theory itself. In Foucault's terminology, we need to avoid "**theoretical reductionisms**" (Foucault, 1980, p. 135), or what could be playfully called "theoretical if-onlyisms." Educators face this all the time: if only you understood or properly applied or "got behind" standardized testing, you'd agree with it. If only you applied these mandated teaching techniques properly, everything would be fine. If only the student did the homework, they would succeed. In this case the testing, the techniques, and the homework are all fine. The failure lies in its misapplication. And again, we have to remember that this applies to our attempts to resist regimes of power as well. If only we respected the unique individuality of each and every child, everything would be fine, if only you could come into my classroom and experience what the students are experiencing, you would understand—these must be themselves examined in light of the very same caveat.

Theoretical Reductionism
The fallacy of "if only" an idea had been enacted correctly, negative effects would have been avoided. In this way, criticism is always deflected away from the theory itself and back onto the person who implemented it.

How many of us as educators have spent hours arguing over mission statements and vision statements? When we try to avoid such tasks, we are often told quite bluntly that it is important for us to set goals, to have objective and aims, and to articulate these clearly so that our practices can be judged accordingly, and so that parents will know of our good will, our visionary acumen, or our theoretical and practical aspirations and beliefs. In fact, there is a whole thread of educational research organized around "teacher beliefs" and their articulation.

Clearly, however, the use of Foucault's analytic tools leads us *not* to ask, "What is the *professed, desired outcome* that we intend in the practices we enact in the classroom?" Rather, he entices us to ask

far more detailed, difficult questions, ones that just might humiliate our professed beliefs: "What actually happens to the child (and the teacher) as a consequence of the practices actually enacted in the classroom? What specifically causes these effects? If this is not what we want, what do we need to understand, or do, differently, perhaps despite our good intentions?"

Foucault's Description of Disciplinary Acts of Power and Knowledge

Foucault recommended that we direct our attention away from our understanding of power as the advantage that comes from superior brute strength and the willingness to exert it, or an understanding of power as a trait, a possession, or a divine right. Power functioned in these ways in the Middle Ages as **sovereign power**, but since the 17th century, in modern societies it is *disciplinary power* that is important to analyze; that is, power which constantly affects each of us during our day-to-day interactions.

Sovereign Power
Power that is "owned" by the sovereign and is exercised in the form of taking things away (taxes, freedom, a person's life). The power of the legal and judicial systems are also sovereign powers. Distinguishable from disciplinary power, which is not owned by a powerful individual and which is not exercised by taking things away. Rather, disciplinary power produces effects on individuals.

Foucault explained that specific mechanisms of power and specific uses of knowledge act to turn us into objects. They lead us to see ourselves and others as mere collections of objective traits and pressure us to feel obliged to either exercise or curtail each trait, by rewarding it or punishing it, depending on its social usefulness.

Foucault argued that beginning in the 17th and 18th centuries, a whole new set of techniques arose that were used not only to make others do *what* the powerful elite in society wished, but to also ensure others did what these people with power and influence wished *in the very way* they wished.

New Needs in the Modernist Regime

Beginning in the 17th century, Western European societies changed in many ways. New philosophies were developed along with a new approach to science. The discovery of the New World stimulated trade and commerce. Vast numbers of people began

to move to the cities. Having been displaced from the common lands of the countryside, or having lost the ability to engage in cottage crafts or to own their own labor, many of these new residents of the cities were poor and uneducated. Many were forced to work in factories owned by profit-driven capitalists in order to survive. Factory owners have a long tradition of using the public realm (government and governmentally funded social institutions) to construct the infrastructure they need for their organizations—including providing suitably skilled workers (Franklin, 1992).

In the factories tasks tended to be divided into the simplest of subtasks, each of which could be learned rapidly and repeated by a single individual without much thought and with no need for any knowledge of how everyone's efforts fit together to form the whole product. It took a great deal of discipline and/or desperation to be able to repeat a simple task in the most efficient way possible, over and over, day after day, for the benefit of a factory owner who paid workers minimally and exposed them to poor working conditions. Foucault argued that with the rising use of the division of labor, there was a need to train people into accepting this as their only possibility and also to lead them to accept the need for each of them to do it efficiently and well; that is, *exactly as directed* (Taylor, 1982). We can forgive educators if this is seeming rather familiar sounding already.

The teeming mass of individuals swarming about the cities needed to become a disciplined workforce for the profit of the factory owners. There were people such as Ned Ludd and Robert Owen who resisted this arrangement, but their socialist experiments were overtaken by the effects of the techniques that arose to meet the need for a disciplined, controlled workforce and to create a disciplined, technologized, controlled force of consumers. Here is one way Foucault (1979) described what happened in Western European societies in the 18th century in response to the Industrial Revolution:

> [This] age discovered the body as object and target of power. It is easy enough to find signs of the attention then paid to the body—to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces . . . La Mettrie's *L'Homme-machine* is both a materialist reduction of the soul and a general theory of *dressage*, at the centre of which reigns the notion of 'docility,' which joins the analysable body to the manipulable body. A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved. (p. 136)

Such bodily docility is quite familiar to educators. We can reflect upon the extent to which we require immobility from even the youngest students in schools, where their bodies become merely vehicles required to transport their heads to school, and their bodies become in our command—eyes on me, sit up straight, stay put, gym class is later, no talking, touching, squirming, and so on. We can reflect, too, on how deep seated is our presumed understanding of bodily "troubles": fidgeting, not staying seated, annoying others, making noise, are all judged as "misbehavior" and, once released for a well-monitored time on the playground, pent-up bodily energies easily become overly aggressive.

> What was so new in these projects of docility that interested the eighteenth century so much? There was the scale of control: it was a question not of treating the body, en masse, "wholesale," as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it "retail," individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body. Then there was the object of the control: it was not or was no longer the signifying elements of behaviour or the language of the body, but the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization; . . . the only truly important ceremony is that of exercise. Lastly, there is the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the process of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement. These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of

> the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called "disciplines." (p. 137)

Again, as educators we can hear echoes in this of how various intellectual disciplines—mathematics, for example—have been transformed in schools to rote worksheet activities which must be done not only in a certain way but within well-monitored time limits, fittingly named "mad minutes" in elementary schools. What has occurred in such instances is that the "discipline" of mathematics has been deeply linked to a form of bodily discipline, a form of bodily docility; meticulous control over the operations of the body, sitting still, paying attention, doing subtly named "math exercises." Moreover:

> The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. . . . The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A "political anatomy," which was also a "mechanics of power," was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, "docile" bodies. (Foucault, 1979, pp. 138–39)

Foucault called this "disciplinary power," which he explained is "a mechanism of power which permits time and labour, rather than wealth and commodities, to be extracted from our bodies" (1980, p. 104). Schools are a prime example of institutions that have the disciplinary power to extract time and labor from students. Not only is *what is to be done* determined under such power; *how it is to be done* is determined as well. Bodies of knowledge become linked to proper procedures such that even when the substance of some matter is at issue, if the proper pro-

cedure is not followed, what is accomplished can be dismissed.

It is important here to understand what "power" means in such instances. Disciplinary power does not involve power in the sense of the personal abilities one can exercise, including the ability to create meaning (Foucault, 1983, pp. 217–18). Power is also not a possession or an attribute of any kind. The kind of power Foucault analyzed should be thought of as a strategy, or rather, as a set of strategies working synergistically (Foucault, 1979, p. 26). As mentioned above, when it is properly insinuated into a social setting, disciplinary power works not as an externally imposed mandate from above or outside, but from within "the very grain of individuals." Ideally, students will be taught to monitor their own behavior, assess their own learning, and do what they are told because they "want" to. From Foucault:

> One [needs to] be concerned with the "body politic," as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge. (1979, p. 28)

Here again, one of the great mechanism of disciplinary power is *knowledge.* As trained educators, we know how to identify when a certain child has trouble paying attention, needs work on their printing skills, or requires their homework to be more carefully monitored. Our knowledge of the child is an investiture of our power over their bodies, their motility, and their lives. And of course all of this is done for their own good, in the best-intended interests of their educational well-being. We reward and punish their misbehaviors in order to teach.

The Goals and Assumptions of Disciplinary Societies

Foucault believed that our modern era is marked by an enormous desire to bring about the aims of our Western, industrialized, consumer society more efficiently by turning each person into as productive and

consumptive a contributor as possible (Foucault, 1979, pp. 138, 164). He argued that beginning in the 17th century, a system of powerful mechanisms was developed to efficiently monitor, control, and coordinate the actions of each person in society. The multitude of bodies was thereby reduced to a unified, faceless "work force" that needed to be controlled in the least costly way possible (Foucault, 1979, pp. 170, 218, 219; 1980, pp. 55, 125, 158; 1983, p. 219; 1990a, p. 89). Techniques of power and knowledge which objectify us (to others and to ourselves) simplify what must be supervised, controlled, and coordinated. Only the aptitudes, knowledge, and actions directly related to the overall needs of society are recognized or used (1979, pp. 138, 162). Anything else is likely to be punished or marginalized. In this way, those in power in a modernist society ensure that each person contributes not only what the powers-that-be want, but also in the exact way that they want it (Foucault, 1979, pp. 128, 169, 223, 272, 295; 1980, pp. 102, 106, 125, 158). Foucault goes as far as to say that "discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine" (Foucault, 1979, p. 164). Each student, their time, and their labor thus become part of the "student body" whose efficiency is under the sway of "schooling." Any time or energy spent doing things that are not contributory to this are at best irrelevant, and at worst, unacceptable "waste" or "incorrigibility."

At the very same time—again, we recognize this line of argument in education circles—any questioning of this regime seems odd at best, simply unacceptable at worst. After all, how could anyone argue against the efficiency of state and provincial testing? After all, we have to have schedules that allow a monitored use of the gym or the playground or the sequencing and delivery of teaching materials when we have this many students in such a confined space. The only alternatives to such regimes seem to be chaos or anarchy. Once we believe *this*, the insin-

uation of the regime is complete, because it now envelops and controls our ability to imagine what might be an alternative to it. We appear to have no other alternative than to believe that anarchy is okay, that students should be able to do anything they want, and that being accountable for the work we do is just oppressive and negative.

It is important to understand that Foucault did not identify a phenomenon he called "power" *in addition* to specifying specific "techniques of power." When Foucault wrote of "power," he equated this with all the specific techniques that objectify and subdue us in our society (Foucault, 1990a, pp. 92–93; 1979, pp. 26, 219; 1980, pp. 39, 88–90, 96; 1983, pp. 210–11). The terms "power," "surveillance," "the examination," "the norm," or any other name of a specific technique of power (techniques described in detail in Chapter 3), represent a change only in the level of generality of discussion. Foucault's sense of "power" had no existence over and above this or that case of surveillance, this or that exam, or the exercise of any other specific disciplinary technique. It is not a theoretical entity which requires a theoretical response. It is a case that requires examination. If we wish to unearth those regimes of power existing in our schools, for example, it is the cases of its actual operation that are of importance, not a general argument over its general unacceptability.

Foucault explained that power and knowledge never occur separately. He argued that there is no independent, absolute, pure, disinterested, perspectiveless knowledge and it is harmful to act as if you possess this (Foucault, 1990a, pp. 11–12; 1979, pp. 27–8; 1980, p. 102) or as if others possess it and want to share it with you "for your own good." For example, Attention Deficit Disorder, ascribed to a child, is never an innocent epistemological claim which simply names what is and is not the case. It is always and inevitably inscribed full of consequences and conditions and norms and expectations, full of images of normality and abnormality, full of regimes of surveillance and warrants for actions that can be

legitimately taken, through the medicalization of what might have previously been named and known otherwise. The same is true, of course, when we romantically suggest that "each child is unique." This too maps out courses of legitimate action and expectation in precisely the same general way, even though the nature of those actions and expectations differ from case to case.

Instead of this naive view of disinterested "knowledge," Foucault (1980) tried to demonstrate the various ways that any piece of knowledge *functions as knowledge* only to the extent that it is *enforced by the controlling practices of power* in that society:

> Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (p. 131)

There have been many senses of "knowledge" throughout human history. However, as in the case of "power," Foucault was only interested in investigating the effects of one specific sense of "knowledge": the knowledge of humanity which is found in the disciplines that give our society its norms, i. e., the knowledge about people which surrounds us in our society and dictates to us who we are, what we should and should not do, and how we should do it. He was investigating disciplinary knowledge encoded in the discourses of the disciplines.

Foucault identified the techniques of power which force the birth of disciplinary discourses (1990a, pp. 73, 96) and enforce the new knowledge they create (1980, p. 51). He exposed the regime of truth and power constantly at work on us (1978, p. 56). Truth in our society, he argued, must be in the form of scientific discourse:

> In societies like ours, the "political economy" of truth is characterized by five important traits. "Truth" is centered on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power); it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through the apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, notwithstanding certain limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological' struggles). (1980, pp. 131–32)

Here we get a beginning glimpse of the profound complicity that we, in education, have always sensed. Not only is "scientific truth"—the quantifiable results, for example, of state and provincial testing—the only warrantable form of "knowledge" about our students; this "truth" is not disinterested and objective but is permeated with economic and political warrants which provide the conditions of its enforcement *as* the form of truth that is acceptable. It is "true" *because* it is enforceable, efficient, monitorable, and controllable in ways that are accepted. Because of this, any attempt to give voice to a truth about a student that does not take this form—anecdotal accounts from an experienced teacher, say—are suspect. Moreover, it is useless (to follow Foucault's reasoning) to argue on behalf of this teacher's account merely at the epistemological level ("Look at what we know in this anecdotal account") since it is precisely the warrant of that level *itself* which is ruled out in ways that have political and economic enforcement. At its most trivial manifestation, a school board might even suggest that such anecdotal accounts are very important, but are so time-intensive that they are not possible to warrant as good assessments of students. The inefficiency of the anecdotal account thus both undermines and determines its status as "truth" and "knowledge."

"Truth" in these scientific discourses always objectifies (1983, pp. 208, 212). It creates its own objects for knowledge (students' skills or developmental levels, special needs, developmental delays, as well as teachers' skills and teaching techniques, modes of student assessment and self-assessment and professional development, and so on). This wide range of objectified possibilities thus becomes the range within which there *are* teachers and students and schools. Some of these possibilities are rewarded; others are punishable (Foucault, 1990a, pp. 42–43, 48). This knowledge is accumulated in our social and clinical sciences and institutions of medicine, psychiatry, social work, the penal system (including the police), education, and even in the family (Foucault, 1979, pp. 215–16; 1980, pp. 102, 107; 1983, pp. 218–19). This knowledge works on us. This knowledge is an integral component of the functioning of power, but this functioning of power becomes central to the ways that it is possible for us to identify ourselves and make a case for our actions.

Foucault wanted to identify and undo the effects of these "rules of right" in our society (1980, p. 93). He wanted to undo the cultural power that the knowledge codified in our social and medical sciences exert so successfully (1979, p. 22; 1980, pp. 84, 112–13, 131, 133; 1990a, pp. 32–33). These disciplines tell us that we can find the final truth about ourselves in distributions and averages and in the descriptions of normal and abnormal which are researched and codified in these disciplines. We need to become aware of the rules that explain and support the claim of our knowledge as truth as well as those that disqualify other knowledge(s) from being true. Whenever an item is presented to us as knowledge, we need to identify the precise practices and expectations of power that legitimize it in its situation regardless of whether we use it, react to it, or refuse to grant it any validity. Conversely, when we are analyzing the effects of acts of power, we need to ask what knowledge supports and justifies each one (Foucault, 1980, pp. 93–94). Again and again, Foucault explained

that the effects of power and knowledge, though logically separable, are never separable in practice and therefore need to be analyzed as two interacting parts of every practice and expectation which objectifies us (1979, pp. 22–23, 27–28; 1980, pp. 51–52, 59, 77, 131–32, 133, 145, 148; 1983, p. 212; 1990a, pp. 60, 73, 97–8).

The Effect of Disciplinary Power and Knowledge: The Objectification of Individuals

The most basic theme in Foucault's analyses is that knowledge and power function in our society to turn all individual human beings into objects that exist, act, or are knowable only in relation to the rules laid down by this power and knowledge. Our 20th century Western society, a disciplinary society, tells us not only what we must be and do, but how we must do it (1979, pp. 77–78, 192, 295; 1980, pp. 98, 142, 156; 1983, pp. 211–12, 214, 215, 223; 1990a, pp. 43 105–6, 107). In a well-known pair of public lectures Foucault gave in 1976, he stated this succinctly:

> In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power. So it is the rules of right, the mechanisms of power and the power of true discourses, that can be said more or less to have formed the general terrain of my concern. (1980, p. 94)

A brief discussion of one of Foucault's examples may help us understand how this objectification occurs. The parallels to education and its understanding of students and their "characteristics" (as well as teachers and their ways) are easy to imagine. Try substituting "learning delayed" for "criminal."

In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault traces the historical shift from the notions of "a crime" and "its perpetrator" to our modern view of "criminality" (or "delinquency") and "the criminal" (1979, especially pp. 101–2 and 255–56). Before our modern era,

people were punished for carrying out isolated acts. In between such incidents, they were their own person again. They were not watched. Their movements were not controlled. A crime would be followed by its punishment, but that was the end of it.

In our era, the consequences of committing an illegal act go far beyond the immediate effects of the perpetrator's actions. Part of the consequences of committing even a single crime is that the perpetrator loses some of his or her individuality. This individuality is replaced by a new identity—an identity which comes from the social and medical sciences (not one which fosters growth of the uniqueness of the person). He or she is now "a criminal," a member of a category whose characteristics are already known and whose future actions become, to varying degrees, predictable and monitorable. The person is studied by psychologists and social workers; the details of such studies are permanently documented; institutions take care of punishment, treatment, and rehabilitation; after release from punishment, these persons are followed and their activities are constricted by both a parole officer and a criminal record. People will react at least initially, if not longer, to such a person, not as an individual person who committed this or that act, but as a type, as a criminal in this case. Treated this way, a person becomes "a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology" (Foucault, 1990a, p. 43). He or she has been objectified, not only for others, but also for him- or herself (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). Foucault argued that by the 20th century, no aspect of our human lives had been left unobjectified, unsubjected—all is known and controlled by our scientific knowledge, the institutions that promote and develop this knowledge, and the disciplinary techniques used in all of our institutions (1979, pp. 206, 209, 211, 215–16; 1980, pp. 55, 122, 142; 1983, p. 224; 1990a, pp. 94, 194).

We Are All Objectified by Acts of Power and Knowledge

Foucault argued that our society operates for the benefit of specific people. He recommended that we carry out the following analyses:

> One needs to investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function. We need to see the manner in which, at the effective level of the family, of the immediate environment, of the cells and most basic units of society, these phenomena of repression or exclusion possessed their instruments and their logic, in response to a certain number of needs. We need to identify the agents responsible for them, their real agents (those which constituted the immediate social *entourage,* the family, parents, doctors, [teachers] etc.), and not be content to lump them under the formula of a generalised bourgeoisie. We need to see how these mechanisms of power, at a given moment, in a precise conjuncture and by means of a certain number of transformations, have begun to become economically advantageous and politically useful. . . . It is only if we grasp these techniques of power and demonstrate the economic advantages or political utility that derives from them in a given context for specific reasons, that we can understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole. (1980, pp. 100–1)

However in other places, Foucault explained that regardless of whose economic or political advantage originally supported the use of disciplinary power and knowledge, because of how pervasively and silently it operates, the knowledge of the disciplines, in combination with the actions of clinical practitioners, has captured our imaginations (1979, pp. 170, 177). Power *produces* (1980, p. 119). It produces most, if not all, of our ideas about what we should do and be ("delinquents always exhibit delinquent behaviours," for example) in order to locate, supervise, and control individuals (1979, pp. 272, 277–78):

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised

> here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads, they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. (1980, p. 98)

The point Foucault made here is terrifying if we consider a particular example. A young child labeled as suffering from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in the classroom has been subjected to an objectifying classification that allows educators to have control over that child and his or her movements, and even allows for extra funding in classrooms containing a certain number of "labeled" children. Note how this latter phenomenon is often used even by those educators who on one hand detest such labeling but, on the other, find themselves incapable of coping with the situation in their classroom without help.

Foucault pushed this phenomenon deeper: that young child, once objectified and labeled as FAS, becomes the instrument of that power of objectification, its "vehicle." That is to say, that child becomes the means whereby the power of such classification becomes justified and disseminated. They become the vehicle for making a case for the continuance of precisely the interventions that labeled them thus in the first place. The reason for the labeling is that the child *is* FAS. Even the good-hearted teacher who suggests that the reason they conceded to the labeling is to get the funding and assistance realizes that not only have they complied with the regime they despise; they have also necessarily subjugated the troubles they are experiencing. All that now "appears" are the number of labeled children in a particular school, classroom, or district.

Foucault argued, however, that *all* individuals, *both* the controllers *and* the controlled in our society, are in fact caught by disciplinary power's subju-

gating and objectifying effects, and are in fact constantly monitored, classified, and controlled (1979, pp. 176–7; 1980, pp. 72, 98, 142, 156–58):

> [The individual is] a reality fabricated by . . ."discipline." We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals." In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (1979, p. 194)

Foucault's concern was that these techniques of knowledge and power objectify human beings and reduce and coerce them into becoming only what is already known and approved about them and their potentialities in the disciplinary sciences. But in this passage, he seems to be going further and saying that even our sense of ourselves as individuals who have a life out from under such regimes is produced by such regimes:

> We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the "social worker"-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements. (1979, p. 304)

This system of systematic, disciplining strategies of knowledge and power is hard to read. It is, after all, not what we *intend* to do in education or medicine or social work. Each day in our schools, we care about and interact with the children who are there with us in all of their unique, individual force. At least, that is what we immediately experience, it seems. When we watch them working, learning, playing, socializing, fighting, sharing; when they are happy, angry, exuberant, interested, curious, inner-directed, absorbed, energetic, thinking and talking constantly, responsive to what is going on around them and reacting for good or ill—whatever they are doing, the children do not seem to have heard of Foucault's analysis or feel objectified. Or do

they? What happens to them when they receive the lowest possible grade on a project when it is the best work they have ever done? What happens when a teacher tells them they are wrong when they know they are right? What happens to them when they need to do something else, or think about something else, other than what the class is working on at that moment? What happens if the child is too hungry to work? What happens if he or she eats in class? What happens when a child must stay in for recess because he or she was "caught talking," but was actually asking a desk mate an important question about the work? What happens if they miss their older brother and want to go get a quick hug from him down the hall? How does a child feel when he or she cannot get the teacher to answer their question, because "we have to go on"? What happens when nothing a child loves or is good at is ever done at school, but everything they have difficulty with is? What happens when, because of time constraints, you say to a child, "Well, I'm sure you have a good idea, but *this* is what you have to learn for the test"? Do teachers ever say that any of their students are "undisciplined," "uncooperative," "spoiled," "unruly," "disrespectful," or "lazy"? What are we really thinking, saying, and doing if we say this? Where does the expectation come from that children should/will always do whatever *we* say? Under what conditions do we expect, and allow, the child to act and respond from his or her own unique individuality and surprise us all? What is our image of the child and of us as teachers when we prescribe who we will allow the children to be at school and who we will not allow them to be? What do we do when we hear Ray tell us:

> I think FAS certainly gives a name to our disability but it doesn't make us who we are. Sure, I have a disability. But I'm productive. I have a company. I pay my bills, I pay my rent, I put food on the table. Not always on time, that's when Melanie comes into help *me*. But I'm still me. I'm still R-a-y, not F-A-S. (Walter, 2001, p. 26)

What will we learn about our educational values, beliefs, and practices by examining our own role in each of the acts of power/knowledge Foucault describes?

Foucault's detailed analyses of these techniques that are all too familiar to contemporary educators—monitoring, examination, norms, ranking, rewards, punishment, training, prescription, exercises, and the manipulation of space and time—are the subject of the next chapter.

GLOSSARY

Continual Variation of Strategies/The Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses: Effects of power (in the case of strategies) or knowledge (in the case of discourses) vary with their context.

Disciplines: Areas of study. In particular, Foucault was interested in the human sciences (sociology, psychology, psychiatry, criminology, medicine and biology) insofar as they had a disciplining effect on how we understand ourselves as individuals.

Historicist Reductionism: The fallacy of reducing the meaning of a historical term to a contemporary meaning, or vice versa.

Local, Regional Knowledge: Marginalized knowledge.

Sovereign Power: Power that is "owned" by the sovereign and is exercised in the form of taking things away (taxes, freedom, a person's life). The power of the legal and judicial systems are also sovereign powers. Distinguishable from disciplinary power which is not owned by a powerful individual and which is not exercised by taking things away. Rather, disciplinary power produces effects on individuals.

Theoretical Reductionism: The fallacy of "if only" an idea had been enacted correctly, negative effects would have been avoided. In this way, criticism is always deflected away from the theory itself and back onto the person who implemented it.

Universalizing Dissolution: The fallacy of overgeneralizing.

Utopian Dissociation: The fallacy of considering an enforced idea independently of the actual places in which it has its effects.

CHAPTER THREE

Foucault's Portrait of the Disciplinary Techniques That Monitor, Classify, and Control

Introduction

> The prison was meant to be an instrument comparable with—and no less perfect than—the school . . . acting with precision upon its individual subjects. (Foucault, 1980, p. 40)

Foucault identified several disciplinary principles that control our actions in order to render them easily supervisable, efficient, and productive (1979, pp. 215–16). To be able to control/prescribe/punish/reward every action of every person, one must be able to classify everything in order to know about it. These activities constantly and mutually feed one upon the other in a vicious vortex which has the objectified individual as its product, target, and premise.

No longer seen or able to function as independent, creative, unpredictable human beings living for their own history, passions, and energy, individuals subject to disciplinary power are known to others and eventually even to themselves only insofar

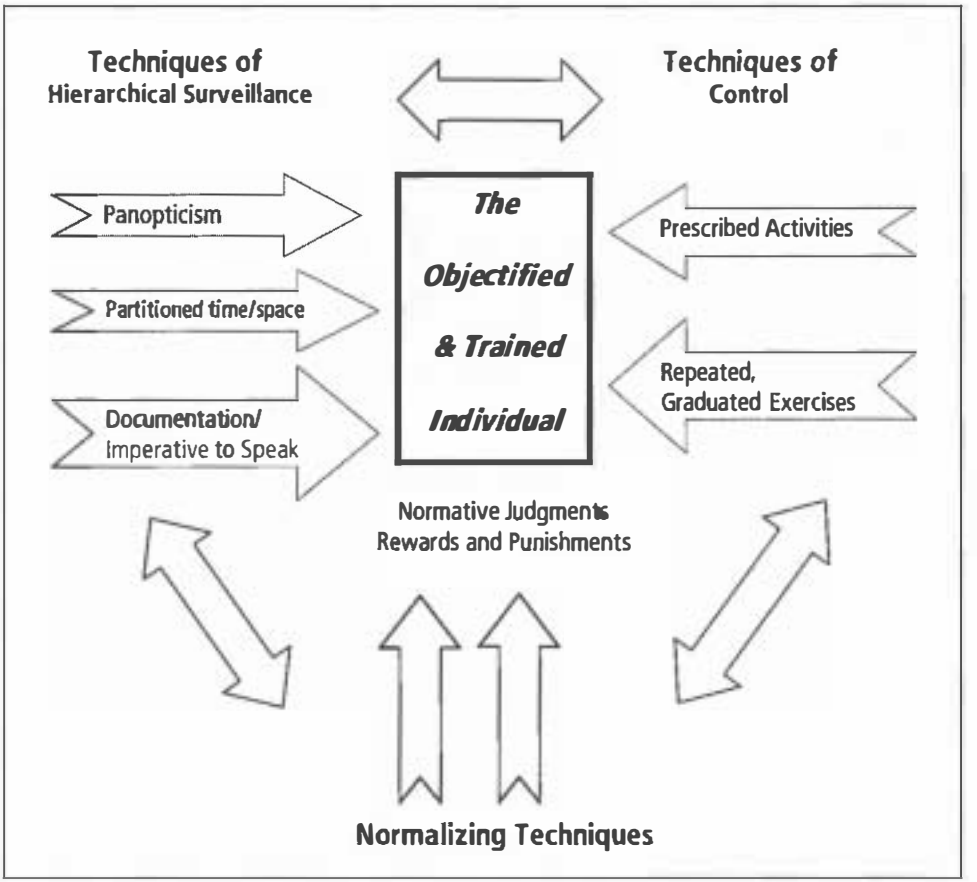

Figure 1: The Action of Disciplinary Knowledge and Power on the Individual

as they contribute to the efficient progress of the efficient production of their society. The individuals at the focus of this vortex are objectified, subdued, docile, and fixed in their position in society, and are unable to collaborate with others unless this is done within society's prescriptions and norms (Foucault, 1979, p. 203).

Foucault identified the gaze, panopticism, the examination, and the imperative to speak as the disciplinary techniques used to cause every act and every person to become known. They are the monitoring techniques. Documentation and compulsory registration, the emergence of scientific discourses and disciplinary writing, the calculation of norms, and normalizing judgment are the techniques we use to classify everything and everyone.

Foucault also described the control achieved by the use of normalizing reward, punishment, and ranking. The partitioning and control of space and time, exercise regimes, and the precise prescribing of the processes involved in each and every activity are the training techniques used in a disciplinary society.

In the following passage, Foucault contrasted the workings of our society, as he saw them, with what society pretends to be:

> Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge. . . . ; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies. . . . We are . . . invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism. (1979, p. 217)

Monitoring: Gathering Powerful Knowledge

To come to know each and every act of each and every person, one must see each and every act. "In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his **subjection** (Foucault, 1979, p. 187; see also 1979, pp. 170–71)

Subjection
Along with "subjectified" and "subjected," this term refers to when one has been turned into an object through an act of knowledge or power.

The Gaze

Foucault pointed out that beginning in the 18th century, all new construction "of working-class housing estates, hospitals, asylums, prisons, schools" were designed on the model of the army camp (1979, p. 171). This design allowed easy, unobstructed, constant observation of all the individuals using these physical spaces from one central location. It did not allow the individuals being observed to see

their central overseer, and did not allow the individuals being observed to observe or to communicate with one another (1980, pp. 146–47).

Bentham wrote of the theoretical usefulness of this architectural design. He called his exemplary building the **Panopticon**. Its "central observation-point [was] the focus of the exercise of power and, simultaneously, for the registration of knowledge" (Foucault, 1980, p. 148):

Panopticism
Literally "all seeing," this term refers to an architectural design that allowed individuals to be observed from a central location without their knowledge.

> [This is] an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control—to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. Stones can make people docile and knowable. (p. 172)

Educators can think of the architecture of their schools. It may not reflect the depth of surveillance that Foucault suggested, but it will inevitably have an effect—a constituting effect—on those who occupy that space. This phenomenon is not unlike the odd actions of a local high school principal who, on first arriving at the school, told his staff and parents that the reason for students' misbehaviors was caused by the lack of surveillance of their actions. He then used a large portion of the school's budget to install surveillance cameras around the school. Of course, almost immediately many of the cameras were sabotaged, leading to the instigation of deeper, more systematic forms of surveillance. Rather than misbehavior leading to the desire to monitor, what occurs is that monitoring is installed to prevent misbehavior, thus leading to misbehavior.

Panopticism

Foucault argued that the principle used in the architectural design that allowed the supervision, information gathering, and control of every act and

Panopticon
The principle of the Panopticon transformed into a surveillance technique.

every person by their superiors, and prevented the communication of important information and ideas to equals, was soon disassociated from architecture and used much more widely and abstractly. He called this the principle of **Panopticism** (1979, pp. 205, 207; 1980, pp. 71, 148; see also Webster and Robins' application of Foucault's account to computerized information technology, 1986, pp. 343–47). In factories and in institutions of all kinds, workers began to be observed daily. No longer judged by the worth of their products, the focus of their supervision and their reward and/or punishment became based on how well and how regularly they worked throughout every minute of the day (Foucault, 1979, pp. 174, 211). Foucault described Panopticism as an "instrument and mode of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used" (p. 205). The constant actual supervision of every movement of every individual is a costly matter (pp. 208, 216–17). However, because those being observed in any Panopticon do not see their central overseer, *they do not know whether or not they are being observed at any particular time.* Therefore, the costliness of observing them all the time is replaced by instilling into the observed the belief that, at any moment, they might be observed—that, in effect, they are observed at all times even if they, so to speak, are not observed at all times (p. 201).

Such individuals also need to conform to the behaviors that are desired at all times, lest they be punished. They begin to be able to do this by internalizing the expectations and criteria for their actions that come from the central observer (Foucault, 1979, pp. 201–3, 216–17; 1980, p. 155; 1983, p. 223). The controlled and the controllers all get caught up in the supervising gaze. Everyone assimilates the prescribed knowledge and practices, so no one escapes being an objectified and controlled source (Foucault, 1979, pp. 210–13; 1980, p. 158). We can just imagine a

young child in school once he or she realizes that any action at any time may be use as an instrument for controlling his or her behavior. We can hear in this, too, the idea of continuous assessment, where there is no special gesture of monitoring but a continuous, relentless gaze, where any piece of work, any off hand comment or gesture or bodily movement might be used for or against them in the future.

As already mentioned, a great sign of the success of such matters is when we teach our children to "self-assess" and "self-monitor," wherein "one and the same gaze watches for disorder, anticipates the danger of crime, penalizing every deviation" (Foucault, 1980, p. 72)—hence our seemingly innocent praise for children who have made "good choices" about their behavior. Hence, too, the horrifying incident when a Grade 1 child, in front of the whole class, has trouble with an assigned task and says to the teacher, "But I tried my best so that's okay, right?"

The Examination

Examinations are another tool for gathering specific knowledge that is of interest from individuals, and this tool is all too familiar in education. Examinations force individuals to try to prove they possess the knowledge "they should" possess, the "official," "safe," "useful" knowledge, the knowledge of the disciplines. It may be that students "know" a great deal more than they can produce on such examinations, but such matters are not simply knowledge that they cannot demonstrate. Such matters, as discussed in Chapter 2, are not knowledge at all. The examination, as an instrument of power and monitoring, produces out of itself what will count and what will not count as knowledge. Such exam-knowledge is then used to classify individuals, to reward and punish them, and to integrate them and their predictable knowledge and effort into the whole of society in a controlled way. Again, this knowledge, the knowledge adopted by those being examined and gathered by their examiners, has powerful effects (Foucault, 1979, pp.185–87).

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them (p. 184)

Foucault pointed out that the examination, as a tool of disciplinary power, is different than the *summa* held at the end of a nondisciplinary apprenticeship. In the latter case, master craftsman and apprentice work together in a way unique to the pair for a period of years. How the apprentice learns his craft is unspecified. It depends more upon the master's modeling than upon an ability to articulate the abstract principles or previously prescribed skills of the trade. At the end of their training, apprentices create a product, a piece, where they draw upon everything that they have learned to independently create the best work they can—hence the examination's name, *summa* (p. 156).

The purpose and procedures of examinations are different in a disciplinary society. Examinations are given regularly, almost constantly. They are used to judge the process, not merely the final product. They are also used to judge individuals and their progress with reference to their group (p. 158). Examination results are used to reward or punish individuals (p. 187) (and in schools, not only those who are examined, but those who do the examining—teachers and schools—are often rewarded or punished on the basis of their student's examination results). In Foucault's characterization, beginning in the late 17th century, we began to enter "the age of the infinite examination and of compulsory objectification." Moreover, once exam records began to be archived, a permanent objectification of each individual was available and began to exert powerful effects on people's lives by judging and controlling what they were, and were not, eligible to do:

> The examination also introduces individuality into the field of documentation. The examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also

> situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them. The procedures of examination were accompanied at the same time by a system of intense registration and of documentary accumulation. A "power of writing" was constituted as an essential part in the mechanisms of discipline. (1979, p. 189)

Individuals could now be placed ("streamed") into a relatively permanent place in their society based upon their past ability or willingness to conform to the disciplinary norms, rather than on their present growth and insight or their future goals and potential ability and initiative (Foucault, 1979, pp.190, 214; 1990a, pp. 30, 33, 56). Foucault summed up his description of the effects of the examination this way:

> Finally, the examination is at the centre of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge. It is the examination which, by combining hierarchical surveillance and normalizing judgment, assures the great disciplinary functions of distribution and classification, maximum extraction of forces and time, continuous genetic accumulation, optimum combination of aptitudes and, thereby, the fabrication of cellular, organic, genetic and combinatory individuality. With it are ritualized those disciplines that may be characterised in a word by saying that they are a modality of power for which individual difference is relevant. (1979, p. 192)

Educators often consider, too, the effects upon us as teachers when we are put into the position of being *examiners.* Examinations do not only affect those being examined. They transform those who design and implement such examinations, as well as transforming our relationships to those we examine. Worse yet, in many classrooms, the looming worry about the upcoming state or provincial test can transform the classroom into nothing other than examination preparation. Teaching itself becomes "teaching to the test" and it becomes more and more difficult to understand what *else* teaching might be. Wanting teaching to be something else over

and above "teaching to the test" seems to be wanting to do something that is at best irrelevant, and at worst, suspect.

The Imperative to Speak

This particular characteristic is especially pernicious in schools. Foucault argued that the effects of power and knowledge again converge in the creation of the institutionalized imperative to speak (1990a, pp. 18, 21, 68–69). He identified the presence of this imperative for us to speak about any knowledge society needs in order to integrate and control our daily lives and the individual possibilities we will or will not be allowed to pursue. Foucault believed that our society is not content with using only its formal occasions for individualized information gathering (Panopticism and the examination). Society also demands that we confess everything that is too personal to be predicted and gathered with these standardized disciplinary tools. Nothing is too trivial or insignificant to escape society's demand for its articulation (Foucault 1990a, p. 19). Everything must enter public discourse (pp. 8–9). A teacher's time is more and more taken up with paperwork, documenting every decision, every strategy, every action. And, in our increasingly paranoid times, the failure to "fess up" is understood at the outset to imply guilt and a warrant for penalty. Why? Because retaining something, refusing to reveal it, is *itself* worth of penalty, *whatever* it may be that is held back. After all, as the old saying goes, if you haven't done anything wrong, you've got nothing to worry about.

> If I were to characterise, not the mechanism itself, but its intensity and constancy, I would say that we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function: we *must* speak the truth; we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth. Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalises, professionalises and records its pursuit. In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in

> order to produce wealth in the first place. (1980, pp. 93–94)

The interrogation invested in power has this effect, then. It transforms anything beyond its power into a danger to its power. Dangerous playground conversations are rendered powerless by being trivialized, or being silenced, or being monitored, confessed, and punished.

Techniques Used to Classify

The Creation of Norms

Surveillance, examinations, the rise of widespread and systematic record keeping, and the imperative to speak resulted in huge amounts of information becoming available about individuals (Foucault, 1979, p. 187). The accumulation of this information made it possible for those in the disciplines, in the medical and social sciences, "to classify, to form categories, to determine averages, to fix norms" about any thoughts or actions that they wished to integrate and control (Foucault, 1979, pp. 22, 190–91; 1990a, pp. 11, 23–24). Such norms occasionally operate by prohibiting certain thoughts or actions, but more often dictate what our thoughts and actions should be, and therefore act to produce what each of us must be. Educators need only think of curriculum expectations and their links to grade levels and assessment procedures. Such norms direct what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, when it is to be taught (in what grade, when during the school year, before and after what other topics), and how the success of such teaching is to be assessed. Each of these norms serves to integrate and control students and teachers alike.

Distribution Along a Normal Curve

However, even in a disciplinary society, where specific criteria and specific procedures are known for most daily actions and individuals are systematically trained to conform to them, individuals still differ

in their ability or willingness to know/conform to these criteria. It seems to simplify the task of coordinating individuals' efforts if those in control know each person's typical performance, if they can classify each person according to how well or poorly he or she conforms to the norm for the qualities or activities that are to be coordinated. Once the norm for a quality or activity is known, each individual's place along the distribution for that norm can be easily determined (Foucault, 1979, p. 184). The disciplines provide the knowledge used to do this (pp. 211, 224). Surveillance and the examination provide the data that allows each individual to be classified. Here is Foucault's description of how individual human beings are known and judged in any disciplinary system:

> [Disciplinary power] brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the "nature" of individuals. It introduces, through this "value-giving" measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal. . . . The perpetual penality [sic] that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*. (pp. 182–83)

The disciplines also began to codify changes in behavior that can be expected throughout a human lifetime (one can think of the immensely elaborate developmental sequences produced by educational psychology for every imaginable form of knowing and behavior in children and how these sequences have become codified in curricular materials and in a great network of highly profitable

textbooks and classroom materials). We began to know others and ourselves through our conformity or deviation from developmental norms:

> The "seriation" of successive activities makes possible a whole investment of duration by power: the possibility of a detailed control and a regular intervention (of differentiation, correction, punishment, elimination) in each moment of time; the possibility of characterizing, and therefore of using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalized and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual. . . . Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use. (Foucault, 1979, p. 16)

In this way, any differences in individual students are only visible as "deviations from the norm(s)." In this way, too, norms become "totalized," that is, they become such that nothing falls outside of them since everything outside is already named in light of the norm as "deviant."

Techniques of Control

Ranking

The ranking of individuals' performance with reference to a norm (from the most to the least successful, from good to bad, from highest to lowest achievement) by a person of superior knowledge and power is one of the major tools used by a disciplinary society. Such ranking is used in two ways: to coordinate and use everyone's abilities most efficiently; andto marginalize, devalue, or eliminate those abilities that will not support the predominant knowledge and power of the society.

Such normalizing judgments leading to the normalizing of reward and punishment for even the most trivial actions. It allows individuals to be arranged into ranks, and gives the ranking its force and sting. "Rank in itself serves as a reward or punishment" (Foucault, 1979, p. 181). Nowhere is this more evi-

dent that in school situations where "marks" become their own rewards. Nowhere is there a sadder version of such matters than the parent of a very young child who does not want to know the details of how their child is faring in school, but only wants to know how they are ranking in comparison to other children in the class. A parent's understanding of the well-being of their own child becomes normalized.

Disciplinary Reward and Punishment

Disciplinary societies not only formulate norms for the actions and abilities they want; they also enforce conformity to them. Individuals are rewarded for success and punished for failing to conform to the criteria of the norm:

> The disciplines . . . defined and repressed a mass of behaviours that the relative indifference of the great systems of punishment had allowed to escape. The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ("incorrect" attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency). At the same time, by way of punishment, a whole series of subtle procedures was used, from light physical punishment to minor deprivations and petty humiliations. (Foucault, 1979, p. 177)

In schools, we find this phenomenon especially under the guise of contemporary "zero-tolerance" policies. Such policies not only "make the slightest departures from correct behaviour subject to punishment" (p. 178) (thus totalizing norms in a new way, where "deviation" loses its sense of range and becomes universalized—*any* deviation is punishable). Worse yet, it has the effect "of giving a punitive function to the apparently indifferent elements of the disciplinary apparatus: so that, if necessary, everything might serve to punish the lightest thing; each subject find himself caught in a punishable, punishing universality" (pp. 177–78). No longer is

punishment a specific act doled out in specific ways. Everything gains this punitive function: you might lose marks, lose days at school, get a detention, lose hall privileges, have to dress differently, might not be allowed to speak, or might be forced to speak. Worse yet again, your fellow students become punitive coconspirators who can gain reward by turning you in at any moment—a "punishing universality" where everything falls under its gaze.

Training Techniques

Foucault identified how disciplinary power and knowledge prescribe what the very process of carrying out our activities should be in a precise and minute way. He explained that we are forced to gain skill in complying with these prescriptions through the constant practice of enforced exercises. Foucault also described how techniques of disciplinary power and knowledge have infused our use of space and time—all in order to render our time and effort more efficient from the standpoint of society's productivity.

Prescribed Activities

Disciplinary techniques prescribe how we should place each part of our bodies while we perform a given action, how one is to hold and use any instruments involved, even how long each part of the action is to take (Foucault, 1979, pp. 151–53). In education, what one is to learn, in what order, and how long each separate piece of learning should take is also prescribed. In order to facilitate these prescriptions, learning is broken up into simple segments. However, in order to help monitor, classify, and control such matters, not only is learning itself broken up and isolated, but also the students learning each segment are isolated from those learning other segments. These segments are then learned in order—from the most simple to the most complex. The learning of each segment lasts a specified length of time, and is followed by an examination (Foucault, 1979, pp. 157–58; Mager, 2000). From this, one can begin

to read developmental theory and its effects on our understanding of students, on our understanding of curriculum disciplines and their scope and sequence, and on the fashioning of teaching in line with such matters as a great instrument of prescription. Little color-coded elementary school readers for young children have thus not only broken language up into a sequence whose legitimacy comes from the fact that it can be monitored (*not* from the fact that such a breakdown makes sense vis-à-vis the nature of language); they also break up children into "reading groups," and the practice of teaching itself is broken up, doled out through developmentally isolated materials in easily monitored and examined ways.

The Exercise

It is not easy to perform actions or other activities according to an externally specified prescription whose main criteria are based upon the desire for the efficient and productive coordination of one's actions with the externally prescribed and segmented actions of others. It takes practice—repeated practice of each isolated, simple component part, then practice of complex skills strung together in increasing orders of difficulty. In the military, in schools, in prisons, and elsewhere, people are required to perform exercises:

> Exercise is that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different but always graduated. By bending behaviour towards a terminal state, exercise makes possible a perpetual characterisation of the individual either in relation to this term, in relation to other individuals, or in relation to a type of itinerary. (Foucault, 1979, p. 161)

The Disciplinary Use of Time

To facilitate the efficient coordination of people's actions, the time each person takes to complete an activity also has to be specified, normalized, and controlled. The aim is to turn everyone's lifetime into "a totally useful time" (Foucault, 1979, p. 150):

> Discipline arranges a positive economy; it poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of

> time: exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces. . . . The more time is broken down, the more its subdivisions multiply, the better one disarticulates it by deploying its internal elements under a gaze that supervises them, the more one can accelerate an operation, or at least regulate it according to an optimum speed; hence this regulation of the time of an action that was so important in the anny and which was to be so throughout the entire technology of human activity. (p. 154)

Timetables are used widely. The period of time that is controlled by being specified is reduced drastically—segmented to the second (and now, in some computer-assisted instruction, occasionally to the nanosecond):

> The three great methods [at work in the timetable]—establish rhythms, impose particular operations, regulate the cycles of repetition—were soon to be found in schools, workshops and hospitals . . . [They began to refine the divisions of time.] One began to count in quarter hours, in minutes, in seconds. (pp. 149–50)

The precise process of carrying out actions is segmented and described second-by-second. The time single actions take is not all that is of interest. After all, the object is to coordinate series of actions into their most efficient and productive combinations. Series of segments are prescribed—combinations of segments arranged in specific order, each of which is expected to take a fixed length of time to complete.

Time itself has become a central issue in education, where time always seems to be running out. However, as Foucault suggested, the small panics that are induced in educators when there never seems to be enough time to complete all the tasks have led to a sort of frenetic acceleration of activity (see D. Jardine, 2000), which is precisely what a regime of efficiency, control, and monitoring desires. Moreover, this sense of the disciplinary use of time has another effect: it has changed our understanding of children themselves, such that a student who

was once considered normal if they could read by the end of Grade 3 is now considered abnormal if they cannot read by the end of kindergarten. The pace of human life and its ways is becoming co-opted by disciplinary time.

The Disciplinary Use of Space

Another basic requirement for controlling and coordinating people's actions is that they remain in a location of their superior's choice, doing precisely what the superior wishes, in precisely the way they wish it, for the length of time they require. In a disciplinary society, everyone needs to be in a predictable place, at a predictable time, doing predictable things. Individuals need to accept centralized monitoring and control, and must learn to act with little or no independent initiative. Who can communicate, and what they may talk about, must also be prescribed in order to be controlled. This is facilitated by the disciplinary use of space:

> One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled difference of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unstable and dangerous coagulation. . . . Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space. (Foucault, 1979, p. 143)

Foucault describes several techniques used to build disciplining space. One such technique is enclosure (p. 141). Here, groups of people practicing one segment of one activity (or at best, a limited series of segments) or people all of "one type" (vagabonds, factory workers, or, we might add, "children with special needs") are placed together and possibly even confined in one place (p. 143).

To coordinate people's activities and knowledge, one also needs to eliminate communication and cross-fertilization between groups. Partitioning is another important disciplinary technique (1979,

pp. 143, 236; 2003a, pp. 232–33). The partitions can be physical (as in the case of school children's dormitories, or the "blinds" that are sometimes put between students when they are being tested) or psychological (as in the division encouraged in the 19th century between lower classes and the criminal class). Once individuals of a similar kind are enclosed in one space and partitioned off from individuals of other kinds, each place can be dedicated to one function (1979, pp. 143–44). Individuals doing the same thing in one spot are easy to supervise. It facilitates comparing the conformity of each step each person takes with what is prescribed, and also the comparing of individuals one to another. Individuals become interchangeable. It is their position or place in the system that characterizes them; their rank, not their birthright (pp. 145–46).

In organizing "cells," "places," and "ranks," the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional, and hierarchical. These spaces provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out individual segments and establish operational links; they mark places and indicate values; they guarantee the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture. They are mixed spaces: real because they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, and furniture, but also ideal, because they are projected over this arrangement of characterizations, assessments, and hierarchies (p. 148).

But these enclosed, partitioned, related places are more than just intelligibly articulated and efficient placeholders for activities and people. They are techniques of control. Their strategy is to enclose people in order to supervise their moves; partition them off from other groups and even other individuals to prevent segregated people from having knowledge and power (1979, pp. 172–73, 200–201, 203; 1980, pp. 146, 148–49):

> The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collec-

> tion of separate individualities. From the point of view of the guardian, it is replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised; from the point of view of the inmates, by a sequestered and observed solitude. (1979, p. 201)

Some Further Characteristics of Power of Interest to Educators

It might seem that Foucault's analysis leads us to believe that power is a repressive force that always works "from above," up some hierarchical chain. This is not the case. Power is not repression, and treating it as such not only misrepresents and trivializes its insinuation in our lives; it gives us an unwarranted "out" in our attempts to understand our complicity in and on its behalf:

> Power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of a great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary, power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realise, it produces effects at the level of desire—and also at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it. (1980, p. 59)

Power produces in us the desire to know what it has produced, all the while hiding itself in its product. We want to know the latest news when it comes to classroom techniques, new materials and textbooks we can use that will "help the kids," new "authentic assessment" methods. Power and its knowledge-products produce a desire for those products, a desire the fulfillment of which further entrenches the reach of that power. This level of complicity is hard to take. This message is difficult to hear, and even more difficult to accept: that our very desire to make things better for ourselves and for our students may itself be caught under "the gaze" and in the disciplining techniques we are attempting to outrun.

What are the ways forward here? Are we just simply and straightforwardly stuck? We now turn to some of the ways that Foucault both described and instigated that might just give us a glimpse of how

we can tell the truth to ourselves.

GLOSSARY

Panopticism: The principle of the Panopticon transformed into a surveillance technique.

Panopticon: Literally "all seeing," this term refers to an architectural design that allowed individuals to be observed from a central location without their knowledge.

Subjection: Along with "subjectified" and "subjected," this term refers to when one has been turned into an object through an act of knowledge or power.

CHAPTER FOUR

Foucault's Analysis of Systems of Human Knowledge and Its Repercussions for Education

Introduction

How may we help our students find and be true to themselves? How may we, as teachers, speak, listen, plan, act, react to, and assess our students in ways that help, rather than hinder, their autonomy? How may we support students as they try, in school and out, to keep alive their joy and fire, their spontaneity, creativity, self-respect, and respect and empathy for other life and for Earth? How may we also help our students enter into the wealth of human knowledge that predates each of their own existences, but is their rightful inheritance? How may we keep alive the deeply human response of wonder, inquiry, and critique of this received language, customs, stories, and knowledge as we usher our students into these domains? How may we do the same for ourselves as teachers, citizens, and adult human beings? Why are we convinced in our modern Western educational institutions that it is correct to standardize all that our students are to learn?

These are fairly ordinary questions, but taken as a whole their effect is quite overwhelming, especially given Foucault's analyses as detailed in Chapters 2 and 3. One of the most important and useful aspects of Michel Foucault's work is that he helps us understand the need for being specific about such questions and issues.

Education abounds with theories and arguments about what a human being is, what "the good life" is, what knowledge is and how it should be assessed, what the suitable relationships exist between an individual and others in their family, in society, and around the globe. As educators, we are entrusted by parents, their children, and society with two vitally important, yet sometimes conflicting, responsibilities. On one hand, we are held accountable for ensuring that our students proficiently learn all of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are mandated as valuable by our society; on the other hand, parents and students hope that we will help each of our students find their own way in the world and help them avoid losing themselves through frustration and alienation, or through becoming lost and overwhelmed by unhealthy pressures, expectations, or distractions. As teachers, when we are committed to this double-edged task we face the need to inquire critically and creatively into how should we conceive of teaching, learning, the curriculum, schools, and educational policies in order to do both things well.

Becoming a human being is a delicate and mysterious pursuit. "We aren't born human beings. We learn to be a human being." This has stayed with me since I heard R. Murray Schafer state this at the Resonant Intervals Conference (1991). It has become part of how I think about living well on Earth with others. And learning how to live well on Earth with other human beings and all other life is fundamental to teaching and learning—especially when, as teachers and students, we recognize the need to undertake the task of trying to undo the system of knowledge and power that we have been acculturated into, a system that results in so many harmful

and unjust effects experienced by many human beings, many ecosystems, and the life within them. Foucault's analyses can help us understand the puzzles, obstacles, pressures, and challenges that we receive from our cultures, our schools, and our societies. His analyses also help to explain our own and our students' negative reactions to modern, Western education.

In his earliest work, Foucault began with an analysis of the nature of bodies of human knowledge. These analyses are the focus of *The Birth of the Clinic* (2003), *The Order of Things* (2002), and *The Archeology of Knowledge* (2001). Foucault's analyses are both powerful and disturbing. His critiques and insights into the nature of knowledge, formulated through his careful, thoughtful examination of historical documents, helps teachers and students question what we are doing when we teach a body of knowledge mandated by a modern governmental department as a body of immutable, proven truths that all students must learn. Foucault helps us question the idea that *Homo sapiens* over the millennia (but particularly in the last two centuries) has been becoming ever-more rational and has been accumulating an ever-increasing body of reliable and valid knowledge that must be learned by all.

At the same time as he is doing this, Foucault demonstrates the narrowing effects that studying a mandated curriculum of modern Western knowledge can have on an individual's abilities to experience the world with fresh, naive, unbiased, open eyes and minds (2002, pp. xiv, 341–42). There is an analogy here with what happens when we learn to pronounce the words in our native language. All babies, even those who are deaf, babble with the full range of phonemes used across all of the human languages we are aware of. However, once children become adept at speaking their first language, they usually lose not only their need but also their ability to make some of the sounds used frequently in other languages, but not in their own. Foucault argued that not only our first language, but also the bodies of

knowledge (objects, concepts, techniques, themes, theories, strategies, and their interrelationships) that we learn in our schools and culture warp us into their own image, and force us to see, understand, and know only a small, biased, individualized, singular, and unique selection and ordering of what is in the world to know. This can, as Foucault noted regarding the example of literature, end us up in a paradoxical position:

> Our culture accords literature a place that, in a sense, is extraordinarily limited: how many people read literature? What place does it really have in the general expansion of discourses? But this same culture forces all its children, as they move towards culture, to pass through a whole ideology, a whole ideology of literature during their studies. There is a kind of paradox here. (1990, p. 310)

This is certainly not a paradox that is lost on many students when they begin to raise questions of the actual relevance of what they are being taught.

When Foucault investigated, in his earlier works, how knowledge in our modern Western societies influences and acts on the formation our self-identity, he referred to this as performing an archeological analysis (2001). Influenced by my reading of Foucault, I believe that whenever we carry out an archeological analysis with other educators (and hopefully also with our students) on the knowledge that we live by and teach in the mandated curriculum, we will make decisions about what it is that we know that will be freer, more fulfilling, and more helpful in our task of learning how to live well with one another on Earth, than if we neglect to do this.

We sometimes resist, or at least flinch, when we hear the term I used in the title to this chapter: "human knowledge." We do not usually describe *our own* body of knowledge, the one we take for granted as obvious, as something that could possibly be otherwise. We don't understand it to be as mutable and fallible as we understand other human endeavors to be, whether they are in the past or created by "others." We believe we have, after all, formulated

knowledge—and thereby its nature is to be absolute, universal, scientifically established, and certain. Humans in each era of European history have held that their own body of knowledge was absolutely, universally true. However, even a cursory look at historical texts reveals that what was held to be knowledge differs from era to era. As a historian and a philosopher, Foucault documented in his writings that, at different times, what counts as true, valid, and reliable knowledge *changed*. We not only see this when we examine documents, texts, and artifacts throughout European history, but also when we compare accounts of truth offered in mainstream works with those from voices marginalized within modern society. Foucault therefore argued that bodies of knowledge are not simply discovered and accumulated by human beings, but are rather created/constituted to serve the interests and circumstances of the human beings in each era (1999). For Foucault, "the achievement of 'true' discourses is one of the fundamental problems of the West" (1990, p. 112), especially since these discourses are incessantly changing.

The Universally True

Foucault requires that we specifically ask, "What is the nature of Western European knowledge?" Much of the knowledge and ethics formulated in ancient Greece still lives in modern Western European thought. The ancient Greek philosophers were convinced that they had established the true nature of knowledge universally, that is, for all time and in all places. In ancient Greek philosophy true, certain, and immutable knowledge was the experience, awareness, or intuition of either pure ideas or concepts (Plato) or knowledge in the form of universals—pure concepts or essences of things and ideas that were unequivocally and universally true and therefore unchangeable or immutable (Aristotle). For Plato and Aristotle, such knowledge of essential truths could only be grasped with much effort and discipline by a philosophically prepared and trained human mind. Aristotle (1941) classified learning

from our sensory experiences and even what we are able to learn from observation and reflection on our lived experiences of particular individual things and events both as forms of knowledge. Nevertheless, Aristotle also maintained that such knowledge of particular events, with their accompanying accidental (that is, inessential) aspects and characteristics, was an unreliable form of knowledge compared to the knowledge of the field of the universally true essences. For the ancient Greeks, being and what can be known from experience were not of the same order of truth and did not provide human beings with the same degree of trustworthy knowledge. In our modern era, we identify what can be established through scientific experimentation as universally true knowledge.

Scholars and educators in Western European cultures up through the modern era, influenced by the ancient Greeks, have held that the knowledge that they sought and gained was universally true, true in all times and places; that is, that it was valid and *real* knowledge. On the basis of this, there is an argument for universalizing educational curricula, for writing standardized curricula and mandating that educators teach it. Many who promote the export of modern Western knowledge around the globe also base their initiatives on this conception of Western knowledge and its universal truths.

This is especially hard to uphold once we are exposed to not one, but many, systems of knowledge that are each internally coherent, consistent, comprehensive, and have valuable insights to offer, as we currently are in our classrooms and in multicultural communities around the globe. It is suspect to uphold the idea, automatically and with no inquiry and critique, that the purveyors of Western knowledge are finally the human beings who have successfully discovered and accumulated a body of absolute, universally true knowledge. Through our schooling, the people we meet daily, and through mass media, we have become acutely conscious of other competing systems of knowledge. This is part of

the deep difficulty that teachers and students face in schools—the arrival of multiplicity, diversity, and difference, right in the midst of an institution that prides itself on being premised upon the singularly true. We now ask "How are systems of knowledge related?" "Are they complementary?" "Does knowledge accumulate through them progressively or in a directed, teleological evolution?" "Are systems of knowledge mutually exclusive?" "Is one true, and all others false?"

How Are Systems of Knowledge Related?

There have been a variety of arguments put forward by various philosophers about how different knowledges, each constituted as true in a different era of European history, are related to one another. Hegel (1770–1831) theorized that all of the previous approaches to establishing knowledge were progressive, either through the straightforward accumulation of empirically established truths (as scientists often hold), or through a constantly improving evolution of understanding toward the goal of knowledge that is perfect and complete in its understandings, or through the repetition of an approach, exploration of its opposite, and finally integration of what is best from each approach (see Hegel, 1967).

In education, we sometimes disparagingly refer to this latter process as "the pendulum swing." In the philosophy of all Hegelians, this is referred to as the events of "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" in the ever-increasing growth of human consciousness toward perfect and complete self-consciousness and self-knowledge which reaches its apex when scientific knowledge truly represents the world in human consciousness. We see a parallel argument at the heart of education itself. In the work of Jean Piaget, the young child's imaginative, embodied, and playful knowledge of the world is gradually replaced by more mature logical and mathematical thinking, which is understood by Piaget to be the apex of human consciousness. Developmental theory in

education recapitulates at the individual level arguments made regarding the "progress" of knowledge at the cultural, societal level.

Foucault argued against the idea that human knowledge is an ever accumulating, ever more rational progress of discovery from the times of the earliest *Homo sapiens* throughout human history until our own times (2002, pp. 139, 145, 169, 205). He maintained that we need to "free historical chronologies and successive orderings from all forms of progressivist perspective" (1980, p. 49). When asked about this by an interviewer, Foucault answered:

> This is something I owe to the historians of science. I adopt the methodological precaution and the radical but unaggressive skepticism which makes it a principle not to regard the point in time where we are now standing as the outcome of a teleological progression which it would be one's business to reconstruct historically: that skepticism regarding ourselves and what we are, our here and now, which prevents one from assuming that what we have is better than—or more than—in the past. This doesn't mean not attempting to reconstruct generative processes, but that we must do this without imposing on them a positivity or a valorization . . . . I say that it is a bad method to pose the problem as: "How is it that we have progressed?" (pp. 49–50)

Instead, Foucault's analyses demonstrated the extent to which each body of knowledge tends to be comprehensive in what it explains. Each one also tends to possess an interlocked coherence to all of its elements. Each is a system unto itself, containing mutually reinforcing elements. For Foucault, each era has a different vision of what the true building blocks of knowledge are and of how to combine these coherently, on the basic of certain criteria, principles, and issues, into a body of knowledge. Foucault argued that each body of knowledge stands alone, with its own systematic rules for its own formation, and acts only as a replacement for (rather than an improvement upon or progression from) any other way of knowing. These systems are each interchangeable. They are mutually exclusive ways of

knowing the world, rather than accumulative, progressive, complementary, or contradictory ones.

What does it mean to modern Western education and to educators and students if knowledge from each era falls into patterns that are all related to the human predicament, but which are mutually exclusive ways of knowing; that are able to replace one another, but are not able to be accumulated into a single, larger system of knowledge? In the Foreword to the English edition of *The Order of Things,* Foucault asked:

> What if empirical knowledge, at a given time and in a given culture, *did* possess a well-defined rationality? If the very possibility of recording facts, of allowing oneself to be convinced by them, of distorting them in traditions or of making purely speculative use of them, if even this was not at the mercy of chance? If errors (and truths), the practice of old beliefs, including not only genuine discoveries, but also the most naïve notions, obeyed, at a given moment, the laws of a certain code of knowledge? (Foucault, 2002, p. x)

What understanding of the nature of knowledge do we reflect and act on when we teach mandated standardized knowledge in our schools? When we meet an empirical fact, do we not simply treat it as just that—a single, irrefutable, unique circumstance that we have observed accurately? No more than that, but no less either? And do we not explain that the body of knowledge in each of our human or social sciences is the accumulation of such discreet, observable, irrefutable facts? Can valuable knowledge not be acquired by learning each of these facts in succession? Why did Foucault talk of a systematic code that is capable of guiding the acquisition of both truth and human error, even in our modern times; of a code that is capable of influencing the very facts we are able to see and the actual beliefs about them that we are capable of arriving at? Certainly, it would be a relief to many students if teachers, textbooks writers, and the designers of most standardized examinations stopped acting like it was worthwhile to memorize disassociated facts in the name of knowledge and intelligence—if they would refrain from

doing what Foucault referred to as "[spreading] over everything a dust of facts" (2001, p. 28).

If we accept, along with Foucault, that people living in each era constitute, construct, or formulate their own body of knowledge, and that several systematic bodies or fields of knowledge and practice (also referred to by Foucault in various places as discursive domains, discursive unities, formulations of knowledge, positivities or discursive practices) are preserved in modern Western societies, what goes on in the classroom would change dramatically. Teachers and students together would have the opportunity—perhaps even the responsibility—to explore what they can learn about these other systems of knowledge and cultural practices, both historical ones as well as those systems contemporary with the modern Western one, but currently marginalized by it. A fact would not then sit before them in absolute isolation. Rather, any so-called fact would point to a coherent regime of knowledge in which it counts as a fact.

This is fairly easy to accept, say, with Linnaeus' great works on kingdoms and species (which are still part of the early science curriculum in high school). We can understand, at least to a certain extent, that this is the way things were once understood. We can understand that to grasp Linnaeus' work, we have to collect around it a whole "world" of events, objects, relationships, images, ideas, hopes, expectations, conversations, struggles, political intrigues, power plays, and the like. We can no longer just look at his work as if it were simply true or false in some abstract, universalizable sense. We can no longer approach it to learn something helpful in our modern lives. We might even compare this to "the Great Chain of Being" that underwrote medieval understanding of the orderliness of God's creation. What Foucault is asking us to understanding is that, for example, the Human Genome Project has *exactly* the same status and *exactly* the same character: it is an understanding of our modern Western age and therefore also needs to be placed in the "world" in

which it has meaning and power. If we follow Foucault's line of thought, teaching and learning become much more complex, much more interesting and much more in need of active, critical, thoughtful participation. We are provoked to teach and learn much more generatively than we would need to were modern Western knowledge absolutely true and therefore totally universalizable (Doll, 1993).

Foucault's Focus: The Rules That Undergird a Field of Legitimate Knowledge

How do human beings construct knowledge? If people living in various eras have constituted their own system of knowledge, why and how are they different? Foucault argued that each era has discernible rules and regularities, objects, concepts, and strategies used to constitute their knowledge. If this is so, where and how can we identify them? Of what use are they to us? Would investigation and critique of these laws, these "systems of regularities" that permeate our knowledge, of these "rules that come into play in the very existence of such discourse" (Foucault, 2002, p. xiv) give us, as teachers and students, any power to free ourselves from the external forces that attempt to mold us into a child of our times through insistence on the knowledge mandated in the curriculum and by the ideas, values, expectations, and practices of our current body of knowledge as we meet it today in school and in society? Or does becoming acculturated into a system of knowledge and learning its codes as a child guarantee that we will be irretrievably molded by that preexisting system and forever experience the world using its rules for the formation of knowledge? In *The Order of Things,* Foucault argued:

> The fundamental codes of a culture—those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchange, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices—establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home . . . the codes of language, perception, and practice. (p. xxii)

In his careful philosophical examinations of historical documents from a variety of eras in European history, but especially from the late Middle Ages until our current modern era, Foucault was not as interested in enumerating and describing the beliefs held in any given era about the topics he was investigating as he was in identifying what form a fact (or observation, conclusion, or procedure) had to take in a specific era for it to be possible for this fact to gain the status of being true knowledge (2001, pp. 181–82). That is, Foucault was not as interested in documenting what specific facts and understandings were present in any one culture's body of knowledge and available at that time to be known as he was in identifying the *underlying procedures and conditions* that needed to be present to allow any specific fact to be accepted as true, certain, knowledge.

Foucault wanted to trace the rules that governed, "the epistemological space specific to [each] particular period" (2002, p. xi). He wanted "to render visible the . . . mechanisms that surround [each] story" (1980, p. 49). It is these rules, this system of regularities or laws, that we learn when we are raised as a child in a certain culture at a specific point in history. Moreover, Foucault argued that, "providing one defines the conditions clearly, it might be legitimate to constitute, on the basis of correctly described relations, discursive groups that are not arbitrary, and yet remain invisible [to the people who use them to know and live within]" (2002, p. 29). It is this set of systematic rules for identifying what it is possible to know in any single system of knowledge, in any **discursive unity**, that changes from one historical time period to another or from one culture to another (Foucault, 1980, p. 63). Foucault referred to these as the **rules of formation** (2001, p. 38).

Discursive Unity
A complete and coherent and unique system of knowledge.

Rules of Formation
The rules that are used to constitute a system of knowledge.

Foucault's Archeology

Foucault argued that whenever there is a specific and unique set of rules of formation immanent in the construction of a discursive unity (or set of dis-

cursive practices), we should understand that we have identified a unique and separate system of knowledge, with its own particular, individualized, rule-bound **dispersion** of concepts, objects, statements, theories, techniques, strategies, and interrelationships that human beings from that era use to experience and know the world. Identifying and analyzing the elements of a system of knowledge, or discursive unity, allow us to answer the question, "How is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" (Foucault, 2001, p. 27). Foucault described the focus of his analyses this way:

Dispersion
The selection, arrangement, and interrelationship of all of the elements of knowledge contained in a single system of knowledge.

> I am concerned to show . . . what modalities of order have been recognized, posited, linked with space and time, in order to create the positive basis of knowledge as we find it employed in [the creation of a system of knowledge]. It is . . . an inquiry whose aim is to rediscover on what basis knowledge and theory became possible; within what space of order knowledge was constituted; on the basis of what historical *a priori*, and in the element of what positivity, ideas could appear, sciences be established, experience be reflected in philosophies, rationalities formed, only, perhaps, to dissolve and vanish soon afterwards . . . . What I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field . . . in which knowledge . . . grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility . . . such an enterprise is not so much a history, in the traditional meaning of the word, as an "archeology." (2002, pp. xxiii–xxiv)

Foucault wrote, "these rules define not the dumb existence of a reality, nor the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of objects . . . [It is discursive] practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (2001, p. 49). Each system of knowledge organizes and orders its elements of knowledge differently. Order relates elements of knowledge in a way that can almost be pictured in each system of knowledge as a grid that waits for its unique order:

> Order is, at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one

> another, and also that which has not existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language; and it is only in the blank space of this grid that order manifests itself in depth as though already there, waiting in silence for the moment of its expression. (2002, p. xxi)

Foucault developed many analytic concepts and tools to identify and delimit the "unities of discourse" or "discursive practices" that form a coherent, interrelated set of elements that together form a single, individualized system of knowledge. Such a system of knowledge contains a discrete set of interrelated and ordered possibilities for the establishment, verification, and application of knowledge and for all the discursive speech, writing, thought, and nondiscursive practices whether "technical, economic, social, political" (Foucault, 2001, pp. 29, 34) that flow from them.

Positivity
A united body of knowledge constituted by the use of particular rules of formation.

When we identify a systematic formulation based on rules and regularities that have produced what Foucault called a **positivity**, we are not talking about a homogeneous network of specific explicit statements that everyone is forced to believe. The constituting rules Foucault identified and examined are at a deeper level than this. There can still be controversies, but a body of knowledge itself acts to control the understandings of people raised within it, and to determine which controversies can and cannot occur (Foucault, 2001, pp. 151–56; 2002, pp. 82–83). The rules of formation guide how objects are described, what can claim the status of "knowledge," what is observed, described, and analyzed because it is understood to be important, which concepts group together or act on one another, and which ones are thought of as distinct from one another (Foucault, 2001, p. 41). In the era of "The Great Chain of Being," what could arise as a warrantable controversy or debate was prescribed as *part of* that era. It might seem like old news that ages ago, the Church did not allow certain ways of raising debates to occur. But consider what would happen if, in the midst of work on mapping human DNA,

someone raised issues of having insight into God's plan for humanity as something that must be taken into account when our experiments and mapping is done. This sort of controversy, although perhaps understandable in another context, is "out of place" in the science of genetics, not because it is false in some absolute sense, but because the science of genetics defines what a legitimate question *within* that science can look like. The controversies of an age exist only within the rules and regularities that govern perceiving and experiencing human life in that era, and there is no "outside" standpoint from which we can take up these matters differently.

The pressures and limitations that each era systematically exerts on its children to see things and know things within the framework of objects, concepts, beliefs, values, knowledge, expectations, and practices that preexist them are both *powerful and pervasive* in their effects.

Foucault understood that the influential, restrictive, rule-bound, regular effects of an era's formulation of its knowledge extends beyond merely opening some possibilities, and also establishing limits, for what can be known and how it is to become known. The rules and regularities that undergird an era's knowledge and form its positivity or discursive unity also affect the *practices* it can or cannot engage in (2001, p. 157). This is commonplace in education. The rules and regularities that undergird our current era's understanding of knowledge, children, education, and schooling don't just affect what we know. They affect what *teaching practices* we understand to be possible and legitimate, as well as what *"studenting" practices*, so to speak, we can legitimately expect as normal and ordinary from our students. Foucault explained, again with reference to 19th century medicine:

> Archeology also reveals relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains (institutions, political events, economic practices and processes, [social relations]) . . . . Before a set of enunciative facts, archeology does not ask what could have motivated them (. . . the context . .) . . . nor does it seek to rediscover what is expressed in them

> (the task of hermeneutics); it tries to determine how the rules of formation that govern it—and which characterize the positivity to which it belongs—may be linked to non-discursive systems: it seeks to define specific forms of articulation . . . [It is a question of showing] how medical discourse as a practice concerned with a particular field of objects, finding itself in the hands of a certain number of statutorily designated individuals, and having certain functions to exercise in society, is articulated on practices that are external to it, and which are not themselves of a discursive order. (2001, p. 164)

It helps to think of these rules of formation for any specific discursive practice as analogous to the rules we learn today when we are taught how to use well-designed, empirical experiments and statistical testing whenever we are intending to add to psychological knowledge. The comparison is analogous because the rules for establishing scientific objects, techniques, and knowledge are articulated, whereas the underlying rules and regularities in a specific discursive formation are not—even though everyone within the system accepts them, not only without question, but also without noticing their existence or their determinative, creative effects.

There is a strong tradition in empirical psychology, for example, that you do not really know anything unless you have been able to create a clean, well-designed experiment that employs operationalizations that actually represent the phenomenon you are interested in investigating, that has no confounding variables, and that has a suitable statistical test to determine the presence or absence of a significant difference between the two experimental conditions. If you cannot design a way to test a relationship, it does not matter how thoroughly you are convinced from your lived experiences that the relationship holds, you are not allowed to state it as knowledge or to act on it as a psychologist. The rules of formation for knowledge within the social science of psychology do not allow an insight from one's lived experience to be created as an object of knowledge. Nor may your idea be related to any

other objects or relationships in psychology that have been empirically tested and already gained statistical support. It simply does not exist in the world of psychology, just as neurotransmitters, for example, were not "in the world" in the 16th century for anyone, psychologist or not. Professional judgments and insights are outside the group of objects and relations that psychological discourse has established, and that form the set of discursive formations, and practices, and relations associated with it (Foucault, 2001, p. 46).

Or, to provide a second analogy, the results of the rules of formation for a discursive formation (or unity, positivity, or grid of intelligibility) are commonplace to analyze in art history. No two artworks are the same, but works of art from different places and times tend to be different not merely in the artists' use of line, form, and color, but in terms of how the art work presents its content, what is known, how it is portrayed, and what it is related to. For example, *The Venus of Willendorf,* Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin of the Rocks,* Whistler's *Arrangement in Black and Gray: The Artists' Mother, The Potato Eaters* by Vincent Van Gogh, and *Mother and Child* by Pablo Picasso all portray mothers, but show that very different aspects of a mother's roles and connections to others are understood to be important in each era (see Janson, 1966).

Various aspects or elements can be identified, compared, and contrasted between various systems of knowledge as they show themselves through the collection of discursive documents or nondiscursive objects and practices from the era that we have available to us.

Foucault's Terminology

In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Foucault defined several analytic terms that he used there and elsewhere to analyze phenomena (such as madness, language and grammar, science, economics, and the legal system and incarcerations) to identify their rules of formation. I will briefly describe this special-

ized terminology here; Foucault used these terms to think with, and therefore rarely explained them in his later works.

In *The Archeology of Knowledge* and throughout his other published works, Foucault seemed to picture a unity of discursive (spoken, written, or thought verbally) and nondiscursive practices (all human acts and creations that are not verbal) that form a singular and individualized system of knowledge that is capable of being visualized as a spatial arrangement. He sometimes referred to a discursive field or a grid of intelligibility. Foucault spoke of dispersions of knowledge, with each system of knowledge having its unique arrangement on the grid of the objects, concepts, theories, techniques, procedures, and interrelationships that hold between all of these elements (2001, p. 60). Such a system does not function like a curtain or screen which people in each age hold before them, and that selectively determines what they can perceive, understand, or do, because it is the "real" world that we experience in each era. However, Foucault (2001) did visualize each system of knowledge as a unique and interrelated dispersion, or scatter, of elements also unique to that system of knowledge. In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Foucault defined the following technical terms for the contents of any grid of intelligibility that forms a discursive unity:

Object
As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, an object is an entity as it appears within a specific system of knowledge or grid of intelligibility.

1 **Object** refers to entities that a unique system of knowledge has constituted. By talking about an object here, Foucault referred not to its meaning in our modern system of knowledge, nor did he refer to it as a single step in an ever more accurate understanding of its true meaning. Rather, for Foucault, the collection of objects refers to what in its own system of knowledge can be known, the topics included in a body of knowledge, where they appear, who can identify them, and what their relative importance within the system is. For example, "Obsessive Defiant Disorder," or even "incorrigibility," was not part of

madness, or psychiatry, in the system of knowledge of the 18th century, yet it is a pathological diagnosis that some of our school children suffer under today.

2 **Statements** describe the relationships between knowledge elements in a grid.

3 **The Archive** is the total enumeration of all of the discrete contents of a grid of intelligibility or unique system of knowledge.

Statements
As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, statements describe the relations between all of the elements in the grid of intelligibility that describes a system of knowledge.

The Archive
As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, the archive refers to the sum total of elements in a grid of intelligibility.

Problematization
As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, problematization refers to how all of the elements in a grid of intelligibility relate to one another.

What is included in a discursive formation, discursive practice, or the archive of a system of knowledge, and how concepts and other elements are arranged, is referred to by Foucault as its **problematization**. Problematizations arise when people in a society need to experience the world differently (Foucault, 2002, pp. xxii–xxiii) In different times and in different places, and under different rules and regularities, what is accentuated in people's lives, what is the topic of belief and debate, of efforts to understand, what the objects of social, political, and cultural power are, what is ignored, what explicit efforts are directed at, what discourses are held to be important for all to understand and participate in—all are interrelated in a grid of intelligibility according to the rules of formation and the corresponding interrelationships that problematization employs. The specific terms that describe the typical contents of a discursive practice can be found in the table on pages 96–97.

These constitutive laws form a system or set of discursive practices that create deep, interrelated underlying approaches to experiencing the world (Foucault, 1984, pp. 352–58; 1990, pp. 221, 243; 2003a, pp. 102–104). Any system of discursive practices has a recognizable coherence to its elements:

> When one speaks of a system of formation, one does not only mean the juxtaposition, coexistence, or interaction of heterogeneous elements (institutions, techniques, social groups, perceptual organizations, relations between various discourses), but also the relationship that is established between them—and in a well-determined form—by discursive practice. (Foucault, 2001, p. 72)

The Term	Its Definition
The Type of Documents Useful for Historical Analysis	"Material documentation (books, texts, accounts, registers, acts, buildings, institutions, laws, techniques, objects, customs, etc.) that exists in every time and place, in every society, either in a spontaneous or in a consciously organized form" (7).
Discursive	Words that are spoken or written or thought.
Non discursive	All human creations and actions, all material documentation (artifacts, institutions, and techniques and practices) that are not discursive
Discursive Field	The discursive and non discursive events and objects that you have classified as a unity that belongs to a single system of knowledge in a specific era (27-28).
Discursive Formation	This can be identified when we are able to identify a system of elements that are held as a body of knowledge and that are interrelated in specifiable and regular ways; elements that we can visualize as each having their own place in a grid of intelligibility that sets our their interrelationships, their own place in that era's epistemic space. There have been multiple discursive formulations in the history of European thought(37).
Discourse	Foucault defines this as "the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation" (107).
Rules of Formation, Positivity, and Archive	These rules are descriptions of the regularities found in a particular discursive practice, space, field, or in a broader discursive formation. They dictate how it is possible to have knowledge, specify the allowable interconnections between aspects of knowledge and set out the valid procedures to use to increase, modify, or correct one's knowledge. To identify and describe such rules within a discursive formation is to establish "its positivity." This set of rules that explains how elements and their associated practices coexist on a grid of intelligibility is also called the archive of the discourse or discursive formulation. "It is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements" (38 and 63, 129, 130).
Objects of Knowledge	What can be known, the topics included in a body of knowledge, and where they appear, and their relative importance within the system. Each names a phenomenon in the world that is identified and treated as an object of and for knowledge (e.g., psychiatric diagnoses, or labels). Each of these objects has a place in its own system of knowledge, but not necessarily in another. For example, Defiant Disorder, or even incorrigibility was not part of madness, or psychiatry, in the eighteenth century. Objects of knowledge have "planes of emergence" (AK, 42); when all can be seen to be connected on the same plane, and all can be explained by the same rules for the establishment of knowledge, then they form a system of thought, a discursive formulation. The elements or objects are co-present to one another and exist within a system of possible relationships (while other relationships are rendered impossible in that discourse (40-41, 54).
"The authorities of delimitation"	These are the groups of people, with the specific background and status, who have the authority to establish an object of knowledge. These objects will nevertheless occur only as "the regular formation of objects that emerge only in discourse" (41-42, 47).
Grid of Specification r Grid of Intelligibility	For example, "the systems according to which the different 'kinds of madness' are divided, contrasted, related, regrouped, classified, derived from one another as objects of psychiatric discourse" (42).

The Conditions for the Appearance of an Element or Object of Knowledge	Each object will have its own place in a grid of intelligibility and be possible as an element in the body of knowledge according to the complex groups of relations existing in the society. "These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization; and these relations are not present in the object...they do not define its internal constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, in short, to be placed in a field of [knowledge]" (AK, 45). Within a single system of knowledge, one can imagine the objects of knowledge laying on the same grid, the same "surface" (44-45, 47).
Discursive Practice	Speech, writing, or thought that follows the rules specified in the system of knowledge as to what objects have been constituted, the ways analysis can proceed, etc. "The group of rules that are immanent in a practice, and define it in its specificity" (46). All of Foucault's analyses were attempts to understand the rules that were used when various objects of knowledge were born and adopted (48-49). These rules define, within each discursive formulation, "the ordering of objects" (49). "Discursive "practices...systematically form the objects of which they speak" (49)"In summary, when analyzing a discursive fonnulation, identify both the elements that are involved in the discourse, how they are related, and how these are all dispersed in a single array (54-55) or grid of intelligibility. If you can do this, you have identified a discursive practice.
Enunciative Modalities	These are identified by asking for each statement of knowledge: Who is speaking? Which institutional sites are authorized to speak, develop, verify, and use this knowledge? What roles are the knowledgeable person allowed/required to play? When do they question the object of analysis (in medicine, the patient), when do they listen, see, clinically observe? What roles, responsibilities, and relationships are established with other institutions--those concerned with knowledge as well as administrative, political or economic ones? Do the knowledge practitioners teach? If so, where and how? What records do they keep about phenomena? (50-53)
The Procedures of Intervention that May legitimately Applied to Statements within a Discursive Practice	Within the modern Western system of knowledge, we would refer to this as the set of rules that govern how data is generated and analyzed in reliable and valid ways. Each discursive practice has its own techniques for gaining, interpreting, and systematizing data within it(59).
The Formation of Strategies	Within a discursive practice, Foucault calls its particular set of concepts, themes, issues and various responses to them, its enunciative possibilities and how this knowledge may be used in other fields or in non discursive practices, its formation of strategies. (68-70).
A Statement	Any statement operates in a domain of possibilities for its meanings and for its relations with other statements that follows the rules discernible in its discursive formulation (91, 97, 99, 103).

Many things help establish a system of regularities that undergirds an era's knowledge, but some of the reasons that Foucault found were historicopolitical, i.e., they have to do with power, the power to know, and the power to disseminate or control what is known that in turn bolsters the power of a specific interest group in society (1980, pp. 34, 38; 1990, p. 38):

> The longer I continue, the more it seems to me that the formation of discourses and the genealogy of knowledge need to be analyzed, not in terms of types of consciousness, modes of perception and forms of ideology, but in terms of tactics and strategies of power. Tactics and strategies deployed through implantations, distributions, demarcations, control of territories and organizations of domains which could well make up a sort of geopolitics. . . . (1980, p. 77)

In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault concluded:

> Discursive practice can now be defined more precisely . . . . It is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function [i.e., what is used, how it is used and who is authorized to use it or not]. (2001, p. 117)

A *Single* Element of Knowledge Is Unknowable

Each fact, object, concept, statement, relationship, theory, technique, procedure, and each person authorized to speak knowledgeably or to take knowledgeable action or execute a certain practice, is understandable as knowledge only from its place and status in the rule-governed, interconnected network of knowledge—from the problematization in the grid of intelligibility of its discursive/knowledge formation. *Because of this, it is not possible to know a single, isolated fact of knowledge.* Even the meanings of words, not just in terms of their connotations but in terms of what they open in the world and how they contribute to knowledge, vary from era to era and

from culture to culture. Foucault argued that you cannot know what something is unless you know what else it connects to that gives it a place in the world, what else it involves and reflects when it comes into being, and what involves and reflects it.

The Significance of This for Intercultural Communication

It is important for educators to reflect upon Foucault's observation/insight that an element of knowledge—whether a concept, a strategy, or a position of authority—is constructed or constituted completely by the underlying rules and regularities that form the grid of intelligibility of the discursive practice it is used in. If we find the same word used in a different discursive practice, where it has a different place in a different grid of intelligibility, it will also have a different meaning. In fact, we can take it as a sign that we do not yet understand the system of knowledge from another era unless we have been exposed to enough documents, texts, and artifacts from its archive that we have been able to suspect how the people living through it perceived, thought, and acted differently from us; that is, unless we have begun to understand how we are a stranger in that system of knowledge or culture.

By beginning to examine our own modern Western body of knowledge and coming to understand what constitutes it and what it omits, we gain an additional, valuable ability. We will be able to begin archeologies of other cultures. We can examine historical cultures as well as other cultures currently existing alongside our own in an attempt to understand the knowledge that people live within in each case. This can help us listen and speak with more sensitivity and understanding when we are interacting with another person from another culture. Increasingly, we do this in our multicultural schools and societies and around our global village. Analogously, when we are teaching young children, or any student not yet acculturated into a specific aspect of modern Western knowledge, understand-

ing that the knowledge we are teaching is only one possibility among others can help us listen more alertly and take more seriously the new, or renewed, possibilities for understanding that children can offer us through their observations, questions, and conclusions that they have drawn for themselves without our input.

We can take it as a sign that we are not understanding another culture unless we have begun to be able to identify when and how they see the world differently than we do; unless we have begun to question what we automatically assume is normal and immutable in our own culture; unless we have begun to see ourselves as the strangers. This is difficult to do. It points to the important role people play when they are willing to be together and speak, listen, and act in ways that build bridges between cultures.

An Example of Foucault's Archeology: Resemblance—Then and Now

In our 21st century discursive practice, phenomena that resemble one another can be described as being alike in some way(s). The underlying rules we follow in our modern era seem to be:

1 If two objects each possess even one characteristic or attribute that is the same, then we can say that they resemble one another—in that respect. Objects resemble one another if they belong to the same category, as we define it in our system of knowledge; for example, apples and oranges are fruit. Objects can have the same color, size, fragrance, texture, solidity, weight, or be somehow associated with each other and therefore can be said to resemble one another.
2 Human beings can have the same personality characteristics, appearance, marital status, leisure pursuits, role at work, or can be associated in some way or other in our minds. We are so strongly cognizant of the individuality of each human being that we are reluctant to say that

two people who can have the identical description applied to them ("brown hair and blue eyes," for example) can be classified as "the same." Instead, we conclude that since each person is unique, they are only "similar" to one another.

3 Processes or events seem to be interpreted either way in our societies—depending on whether you are prone to thinking of them as abstract procedures that people follow step by step, or whether you approach each day and each experience as unique and potentially full of surprises. Teaching is sometimes planned as if it were a procedure, a pattern that we can abstract out and follow in the *same* way each time. Others always expect the planned and the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1986) to differ—so two teaching events that resemble one another can only be seen to be *similar* each time a specific plan is enacted.

For us, resemblance seems to occur after the fact, whenever identical descriptions or classifications happen to be able to be applied to a specified aspect of two or more phenomena. It is a connection we *make* on the basis of our experience. Whether straightforward connection or a more metaphorical one, when we hear statements declaring resemblance we visualize a person making a comparison more than we focus upon the fact that the two entities must resemble one another in their own existence before we can make that connection. Do we often think of how things resemble one another? Is it important to us to notice when two things resemble one another? Is there any power associated with the ability to resemble something else? Short of camouflage for wildlife and armies, I find it hard to think of any important knowledge or power to be found from identifying resemblances. In the 21st century, it seems that we are more often concerned with how things differ: how each of us is unique, how we want our homes to be personalized as our own (at least inside), how we have our own identity as teach-

ers, how each student learns differently, on the need to differentiate our teaching and assessment (Tomlinson, 1999), on the pleasure of seeking out new and different possessions and new and different experiences.

Resemblance in the 16th Century

In Chapter 3 of *The Order of Things,* Foucault ushered us into the 18th century's ways of understanding, relating to, and acting on *resemblance.* Don Quixote is our guide and also the hero of the text which Foucault analyzed to gain insight into the place of resemblance in the grid of intelligibility of the 18th century, to gain insight into the underlying rules that made use of resemblance in ways we do not use them today. Referring to Don Quixote, Foucault wrote:

> His whole journey is a quest for similitudes: the slightest analogies are pressed into service as dormant signs that must be awakened and made to speak once more. (2002, p. 52)
>
> Don Quixote is the first modern work of literature, because in it we see the cruel reason of identities and differences make endless sport of signs and similitudes; because in it, language breaks off its old kinship with things and enters into that lonely sovereignty from which it will reappear, in its separated state, only as literature; because it marks the point where resemblance enters an age which is, from the point of view of resemblance, one of madness and imagination. (p. 54)

Foucault went on to characterize a person who is able to see the sign existing in each phenomenon, person, idea, or event he or she meets, as a madman. To do this in Don Quixote's time was beginning to be no longer understood as wisdom or a way to gain erudite, valuable knowledge. To do so was suddenly seen as following misleading clues that your own imagination was providing and that would lead you into to error (p. 56). By the 18th century, only poets could look at disparate things, articulate their analogous similarities, and have their statements of resemblance valued.

In our own time, we read accounts of how ancient Greek and Roman, medieval, and Renaissance naturopathic healers found their medicinal plants. Our explanations for this go something like this: When someone used their imagination and saw that the leaf of the digitalis plant could be called heart-shaped, herbalists decided it would be efficacious for heart trouble. By trial and error, they established that it was. That is why we use a drug that mimics a substance in the digitalis plant even today for heart problems.

In this account, the only rule for establishing valid knowledge seems to be the trial-and-error experimentation that led to identifying the usefulness of the plant. For us to make associations between two entities based on something that we understand, but which does not contain a mechanism or description of a chemical reaction that explains the similarity, is to spin childish fancies or to play games (Foucault, 2001, pp. 56–57). We are sometimes amazed, or at least amused, in our own time when we hear children do this. *Why was identifying resemblance taken seriously by 18th century adults and not by ourselves?*

It was while reading Foucault's account of this that I experienced a little of what it is like to live within the expectation that identifying similarities in things around you would lead you towards gaining important knowledge that you could use to live well on Earth with others. This in turn led me to understand more deeply what Foucault may have meant when he explained that when you move an element of a system of knowledge from one system to another, even if you are using the same word for a similar meaning, the element will no longer have the same place in the grid of intelligibility. Rather, the element in question needs to be understood from within its own rules for the formation of knowledge, from its own set of discursive practices. That is why I want to try to re-create the effects of the archeology of *resemblance* in the 16th century that Foucault carried out as an example.

However, before I do that, I want to emphasize the need to read elements of knowledge from their

own grid, rather than impose our own whenever our thinking belongs to a different discursive practice. In the following passage, Foucault provided us with an example of what explanations can look like when we do not look at each formulation of knowledge within its own terms, but try to squeeze it into a progressivist mold that has its own system of knowledge at the pinnacle. Speaking of the early 17th century, a time of transition and transformation, Foucault wrote:

> [It was] the nature of things that the knowledge of the sixteenth century should leave behind it the distorted memory of a muddled and disordered body of learning in which all the things in the world could be linked indiscriminately to men's experiences, traditions, or credulities. From then on, the noble, rigorous, and restrictive figures of similitude were to be forgotten. And the signs that designated them were to be thought of as the fantasies and charms of a knowledge that had not yet attained the age of reason. (2001, p. 57)

In education, we need to be careful not to give such explanations of things—descriptions that contain equally imposed values, that equally distort situations, but which masquerade as true explanations. We need to be alerted when we hear them and try to sort out the discursive practices that are feuding in the account. We also need to teach our students to read documents this way—to be able to identify when an element is being forced to fit into another framework than the one it originally gained its meaning in. For example, I wonder what is happening, what distortions have occurred, when Western journalists say, "These people want a *jihad*" or "We are on a crusade." In each case, these sentences contain words that are highly charged both within and between two systems of knowledge, the Christian and the Muslim ones. Yet in the West, we do not often stop and ask to find out more about the understanding in Muslim thought of "a jihad." We try to collapse it into our notion of a holy war, a war over religion. What is lost? What inaccuracies appear when we do this? We need to teach students to do archeologies of other

cultures' ideas, rather than assume the meanings are the same.

What would we, with our modern understandings, need to do in order to hear the following passage not as fanciful or as in error, but as literal and correct? Who would have to tell us that this was true for us to believe it? What role would such a person need to have in society? What knowledge would this have to be based on? What voices would we need to learn to enter a world where resemblance teaches us all that we need to know? In *The Order of Things,* Foucault explained:

> Up to the end of the sixteenth century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture. It was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them. The universe folded in upon itself: the earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars, and plants holding within their stems the secrets that were of use to man. (2001, p. 19)

How was resemblance understood and experienced as a legitimate element of knowledge in the 16th century? Foucault (2002) investigated a great many elaborations of insights about this in documents from the 16th century and before. He isolated four that were always important elements of the knowledge formulation to use when analyzing resemblance:

1 *Convenientia:* A way to gain similarity from sharing the same place. This can lead to many connections, similitudes, or similarities developing and fusing between phenomena—body and soul become entangled this way, as does all life on Earth, which in turn entwines and resembles God. (pp. 20–21)
2 *Aemulatio:* A form of what we might today call resonance. Similitude that does not need proximity or convenience to activate, but where resemblances reflect each other infinitely. Emulation is another word from our modern system of knowledge that captures some of the

sense of this meaning in the 16th century. (pp. 21–23).

3 *Analogy:* Foucault explained:

> An old concept already familiar to Greek science and medieval thought, but one whose use has probably become quite different now. In this analogy, *convenientia* and *aemulatio* are superimposed. Like the latter, it makes possible the marvelous confrontation of resemblances across space; but it also speaks, like the former, of adjacencies, of bonds and joints. Its power is immense, for the similitudes of which it treats are not the visible, substantial ones between things themselves; they need only be the more subtle resemblances of relations. Disencumbered this, it can extend, from a single given point, to an endless number of relationships. . . . Through it, all the figures in the whole universe can be drawn together. (p. 24)

How do we in modern Western societies think of analogy? To me, it is a type of poetic comparison that human beings can create. We can say one phenomenon is experienced like another for us, if we wish to give a quick explanatory sense of how the two are similar, without going into a long list of explicit details. For example, for me to say, "Writing my first book is as nerve-wracking as teaching my initial lessons was when I was a student teacher" declares an analogical relationship between my experiences in each case. In our modern usage, to formulate an analogy is to say something about our own perceptions of the relationship between two phenomena. Metaphorically, we can potentially let our creative minds wander and create analogies that could relate everything in the universe to everything else. But for us, it is we who are *creating* a connection with our words and in our imaginations—not *discovering* connections that actually bind everything to everything else. Yet, this is what analogy meant to people living in 16th century Europe. Through analogy, "all the figures in the whole universe [are] drawn together" (Foucault, 2002, p. 24).

To attempt to avoid reading our own understanding of any statement that belongs to the knowledge of another era and to try to penetrate what it used to mean reminds me of a lesson that I learned while horseback riding. When my horse Jay and I passed through a summer meadow, I thought of how beautiful the diverse range of flowers and bushes were to see and smell. Because of how often I had to pull his head up and keep walking, I realized that my horse, on the other hand, was walking through food; he was seeing a *smorgasbord* and I was asking him not to eat. At the time, I reflected how completely the same phenomenon can be perceived differently, depending on what you bring to the encounter, and who or what you are.

Analogously, between our own era and any other era or culture that has different underlying rules and regularities for the formation of its body of knowledge and its discursive and nondiscursive practices, there are the same important differences in what we experience, even when we are apparently in the same circumstances, as there were between that my horse's experience and mine.

4 *Sympathies and Antipathies:* The fourth important way resemblance could be experienced was the one that caught my imagination deeply and helped me begin to abandon my 21st century knowledge of what resemblance "is." The following passage contains Foucault's description of "the play of *sympathies*." Thinking about what we mean by "sympathy" today, is the logic of this progression what you expect, as a 21st century reader?

> And here, no path has been determined in advance, no distance laid down, no links prescribed. Sympathy plays through the universe in a free state. It can traverse the vastest spaces in an instant: it falls like a thunderbolt from the distant planet upon the man ruled by that planet; on the other hand, it can be brought into being by a simple contact—as with those 'mourning roses that been

> used at obsequies' which, simply from their former adjacency with death, will render all persons who smell them 'sad and moribund' . . . [Sympathy] excites the things of the world to movement and can draw even the most distant of them together. . . . Sympathy is an instance of the *Same* so strong and so insistent that it will not rest content to be merely one of the forms of likeness; it has the dangerous power of *assimilating*, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear—and thus of rendering them foreign to what they were before. Sympathy transforms. It alters, but in the direction of identity, so that if its power were not counterbalanced, it would reduce the world to . . . homogeneous mass. This is why sympathy is compensated for by its twin, antipathy. Antipathy maintains the isolation of things and prevents their assimilation. (2002, pp. 26–27)

Sympathy and antipathy are properties that describe a state that entities continually experience. This pair causes things "to grow, develop, intermingle, disappear, die, yet endlessly find themselves again" (p. 28).

Do we see this in what surrounds us in our daily life today? Can we understand what it is like to live in such a world? What was it like to look at a heart-shaped leaf and feel your heart jump in sympathetic response? What was it like to feel the water you saw flowing in front of you also flow through your body? To feel a sympathetic pull to fire, earth, rock, wood, and air? Remember being madly in love when you were young? What would it be like to be drawn and/or repulsed to everything that way? What would it be like to not only hate an evil entity, but be repulsed with antipathy? Can you imagine "going about your daily business" within such a world—where each thing you encounter, *because of its own agency, in combination with your own,* has the power to either attract or repel you? How could you then exist as an individual on your own course of action and able to choose whether or not you will be affected by what and

who are around you? Taking action in the 16th century seems *to us* to have been much more complicated for human beings, or at least it seems to be so for us when we begin to get an imaginative grasp of this unfamiliar way of knowing.

Archeology Is a Wedge

Although Foucault argued that we are molded by the preexisting language, system of knowledge, and acts of power that we are originally acculturated into (2002, pp. viv–xv), it seems we can lever apart our own grid of intelligibility and begin to experience another one. The wedge to use is an extended immersion in and examination of the discursive and nondiscursive practices of another culture (whether a historical or a marginalized one). Once we are aware that a phenomenon we are trying to understand belongs to a text from another time, or is an utterance or text originating with a person from another culture, we need to immediately expect that we do not yet understand the phenomenon. We need to probe, ask questions, and try to reconstitute the particular cultural dispersion of the discursive practices and understandings to which the phenomenon belongs. We need to begin to automatically remember to *listen for more,* to automatically delay our judgment about what something means, until we have deliberately found out more about the context in which it was uttered and the associations and emotional valences it carries for the other person and the other culture. We need to teach our students to do this as well.

Each individual in an intercultural encounter is acculturated into his or her own system of knowledge and power, and not into that of the other. Given the nature of systems of knowledge in Foucault's analysis, each person can expect to experience, think, and speak using the objects, concepts, relationships, techniques, strategies, questions and issues (problematizations), expectations, and practices that they have become acculturated into. And

each person can expect not to experience or necessarily understand the objects, concepts, relationships, techniques, strategies, questions and issues (problematizations), expectations, and practices taken as unquestionable in the other culture. And yet people do bridge their cultures, just as Foucault's examinations of documents led him to bridge historical time periods and reach understandings different than those contained in his own system of knowledge and power. It takes care, time, a willingness to put your own truths at risk (Gadamer, 1994), openness to the unexpected, and a genuine willingness to interact reciprocally; but understandings of the other person and other culture can be built. It does seem possible to step out of the massive grid of prison bars (the grid of intelligibility) within which each of our cultures seems to imprison us.

Can Systems of Knowledge and Power Transform?

In Foucault's analyses, there have been historically and are currently many discrete, singular, individualized systems of knowledge. Archeology is a static examination of a single system. But historically, in Western European the system of knowledge used to gain knowledge even in one location or culture has changed. This is unexpected, given Foucault's analysis and arguments that strongly state that all of our possibilities for knowing and living are molded before we are born in the system of knowledge we are acculturated into. Nor is change of an entire regime of knowledge and power expected to be possible, given Foucault's analysis of how pervasive and thorough are the workings of modern acts of power and their capillary effects on the individual. Nevertheless, we have experienced such changes in the past, and Foucault himself wanted a shift to happen (1990, p. 328). This is good news for educators who want to help bring about another such shift in our future. In the next chapter, I will describe and critique Foucault's ideas about how we can work together to bring such an immense shift about once

again.

GLOSSARY

Discursive Unity: A complete and coherent and unique system of knowledge.

Dispersion: The selection, arrangement, and interrelationship of all of the elements of knowledge contained in a single system of knowledge

Object: As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, an object is an entity as it appears within a specific system of knowledge or grid of intelligibility.

Positivity: A united body of knowledge constituted by the use of particular rules of formation.

Problematization: As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, problematization refers to how all of the elements in a grid of intelligibility relate to one another.

Rules of Formation: The rules that are used to constitute a system of knowledge.

Statements: As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, statements describe the relations between all of the elements in the grid of intelligibility that describes a system of knowledge.

The Archive: As a technical term for analyzing a system of knowledge, the archive refers to the sum total of elements in a grid of intelligibility.

CHAPTER FIVE

Real Possibilities for Resistance and Struggle

Introduction

Is it currently possible to transform the modern, Western, disciplinary system of knowledge and power that acts so pervasively to objectify and mold us in our individual lives? Is it possible for us to stop thinking with and acting upon our modern, disciplinary ways with one another in our educational institutions and societies? Is it possible for educators, parents, and students themselves to keep alive their own center of unique receptivity and responsiveness throughout their entire lives? I suggest that to see this as a "romantic" rather than as a freeing and inspiring is to think about this only within the possibilities dictated to us by the regime of disciplinary power and knowledge.

At first glance, given Foucault's own analysis of the number and pervasiveness of the effects that the modern Western regime of knowledge and power exerts on each of us and that we each exert on other individuals at the level of our own individual daily

lives, it is easy to understand how any singular regime of knowledge and power maintains itself, and not at all easy to understand how it is possible for people acculturated within any one system to be able to adopt another. Certainly just wishing does not make it so.

But, of course, Foucault's historical analysis has identified more than one regime of knowledge and power held by the peoples of Western Europe (2002, pp. 235–36). More than once, the underlying rules for arriving at knowledge, the objects of knowledge, the statements of their interrelationships, and who is authorized to speak (from which sites in society) have been transformed. Two of the transformations in the history of Western Europe that Foucault investigated the most extensively were the change in the entire discursive unities that occurred (1) around the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th; and (2) at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th.

In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Foucault explained the analytic terms he used to describe a change, when "the substitution of one discursive formation for another takes place" (2001, p. 171), but as his use of the passive voice here indicates, Foucault did not focus upon documenting the causes of such a transformation. Specifying such things as the set of insights, discoveries, human actions, or the presence of serious new problems that historically seem to have sparked this or that change is outside the purview of Foucault's analysis (2002, pp. xiii–xiv).

In Foucault's analyses, transformations from one system of knowledge and power to another seem to take place automatically, without human intervention. But I think this is an artificial artifact that arises because Foucault was doing analysis of historical documents. He worked backwards, examining documents from the past in order to identify how specific acts of knowledge and/or power morphed from one system to another. He was not interested in the human agents or discoveries that history sometimes credits with each impetus to change, but

in how the meaning of each use of a concept changed in specific ways from one document to another. He also worked in this way when he performed genealogies.

Foucault's Genealogies

In his later works, Foucault developed a new set of analytic techniques. He began to investigate the genealogy of selected elements of knowledge. He explicitly defined genealogy as "the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today" (1980, p. 83; see also pp. 61, 81–92; 1983, p. 237; 2003, p. 12). The concepts for which Foucault constructed genealogies were always those involved in an issue of contemporary importance (1990, p. 262). Working by meticulously analyzing specific historical documents or artifacts, Foucault explicitly traced the ways that interested parties act step by step to attach power to some knowledge and not to others. He also analyzed how the rise of certain concepts, values, or practices (elements of knowledge) extends power to certain groups and not others.

For example, in *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France 1974–1975* (2003a), Foucault traced how over a few decades the system of truth that was being established (medical-judicial knowledge) functioned to confer the ability to act with power on judges and psychiatrists, but not criminals or those who received a diagnosis of mental illness. Briefly, judges needed to be able to classify certain individuals who had carried out irrational, unthinkable crimes as insane, even though they failed to suffer any delirium (the only description of mental illness in the 18th century penal code). They turned to psychiatrists to gain the power to avoid incarcerating such people, and to commit them to a mental asylum instead. Psychiatry, on the other hand, was a new field of study or discipline. It was not yet understood to be part of medicine, but rather as an agent of public safety empowered only to act for

society's benefit. Foucault described the documents that, by way of the concept of "instincts," allowed psychiatry, step by step, to become understood as a science that deals with illness (p. 134). It did this by establishing the acceptance of the idea that psychiatric knowledge could identify individuals who were likely to commit a crime before they even had the thought of doing so. When such individuals were committed to a mental institution, society as a whole was no longer in danger from their behavior. Psychiatry was able to do this through its century-long elaboration of the concepts of normality and abnormality. All individuals who deviated from the regular, natural, normal rules came to be designated as abnormal (pp. 323–28). Foucault wrote:

> The mad criminal makes his appearance first and foremost as a monster, as an unnatural nature. The history of abnormal individuals (*les abnormaux*) begins quite simply with King Kong; that is to say, from the outset we are in the land of the ogres. The dynasty of abnormal Tom Thumbs has its roots in the figure of the ogre. . . . The problem I would now like to consider is how it came about that over the years the stature of these monstrous giants was gradually reduced so that if the monstrous character still appears at the end of the nineteenth century, as in fact he does, it is as no more than a sort of exaggerated, paroxysmal form of a general field of abnormality that constitutes the daily fare of psychiatry, on the one hand, and of criminal psychology, penal psychiatry, on the other? How, then, could the species of great exceptional monstrosity end up being divided up into this host of little abnormalities, of both abnormal and familiar categories? How did criminal psychiatry pass from a form in which it questioned great cannibalistic monsters to a practice of questioning, analyzing, and measuring bad habits, little perversities, and childish naughtiness? (pp. 109–110)

In *Abnormal*, Foucault traced the ways that medical doctors, including psychiatrists, created a demand in families for medical help in keeping their children well—and normal. Educators are extremely familiar with the descriptions that have been created ever

since, of what is normal for every dimension of human development and behavior. Through Foucault's works, we can trace the changes in objects, concepts, techniques, enunciative modalities and their interrelationships that allowed the 18th century system of knowledge and power to morph into our own.

However, as phrases like "the stature . . . was gradually reduced" from the passage cited above shows, Foucault was still referring to this in the passive voice, as changes that have occurred, with no mention of any agent for such change. He did not describe how to transform concepts, techniques, and their interrelationships with values. There are no hints *so far* as to what *we* need to do to transform our own modern systems of knowledge and power that are proving so dangerous for all life on Earth.

The Power of Critique

It is important to investigate what allows people in a culture to effectively shift their understanding and its underlying rules and regularities away from their established knowledge, values, expectations, and practices, because we so desperately need to do this in the 21st century if we are to live well with all other life, and if human and nonhuman life on Earth is to continue. I want to learn how these things shift, in order to shift my own thinking. I want to take Foucault's analytic concepts up with my students and together work out better ways to know and to live.

For Foucault, the agent that could transform one system of knowledge and power into another was thought and critique. In spite of our acculturation into this or that system of knowledge and power:

> What distinguishes thought is that it is something quite different from the set of representations that underlies a certain behavior; it is also something quite different from the domain of attitudes that can determine this behavior. Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its

> meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem. (1984, p. 388; see also Foucault, 1990, p. 330)

Critique was a crucial important part of life for Foucault and he shared many analytic tools, concepts, arguments, and insights with us for use in working to understand and evaluate what is occurring in the contemporary questions, issues, and crises that we are each involved in:

> A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practice that we accept rest. (1990, p. 154)
>
> Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult. (1990, p. 155)

Given the force of Foucault's analyses in convincing us that once we are acculturated, we experience the world through a set of discursive practices, it is possible to think of changing these from one set to another, but not to think of a pure uncategorized experience of life on Earth. Even young children build their own categories as they reflect on the world. As a toddler, our son knew that animals fell into two categories. Whenever he saw any creature the same size or smaller than a cat, he would name it by imitating the sound that the squirrels made that used to live in our oak tree ("with a sibilant series of wet F sounds"). Horses, cows, and all animals the same size as or larger than a dog were called "wow-wow" (after his Grandmother spent an entire afternoon when he was a year old, trying to teach him that dogs say "bow-wow"). Only in *The Order of Things,* first published in 1966, did Foucault appeal to the possibility of our connecting with and experiencing an uncategorized world (2002, pp. xxii–xxiii).

Struggles and Resistances

In "Lecture One: 7 January 1976," published as part of "Two Lectures," Foucault (1980, pp. 78–92) identified the possibility of one type of positive action that we can take to transform our current system of knowledge and power. He was referring to the move way from interpreting events in terms of mega-theories such as Marxism and towards engaging in the "local character of criticism" witnessed since the 1960s. He argued that we need to engage in "an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one that is to say whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought" (1980, p. 81).

Foucault also recognized that where power is exerted, there is resistance—otherwise, it would be a case of obedience (pp. 81–83). He identified knowledgeable people (inmates in prisons, patients in mental hospitals, etc.) whose voices we refuse to listen to even though we want to understand them. Foucault explained that such voices possess "subjugated knowledges." Knowledge of specific elements of historical systems of knowledge and power, and of systems of knowledge and power from other cultures, are also subjugated knowledges. In "Lecture One," Foucault spoke of "an insurrection of subjugated knowledges":

> Subjugated knowledges are thus those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory and which criticism—which obviously draws on scholarship—has been able to reveal. . . . One should [also] understand . . . something which in a sense is altogether different, namely, a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges, those unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges (such as that of the psychiatric patient, of the ill person, of the nurse . . . of

> the delinquent etc.) . . . that criticism performs its work. (p. 81)

This led Foucault to articulate a different description of "genealogy" than he had given earlier in the "Abnormal Lectures" of 1974–1975. In "Lecture One" in 1979, Foucault proposed a version of genealogy that had a great affinity to the sort of work that a teacher might engage in, a "union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today" (1980, p. 83; see also p. 85). For Foucault, listening to, reading, and engaging in conversations with people who experience, know, and enact their daily lives within a different system of knowledge can act as a wedge to pry open the unity of your own system of knowledge and power, and allow you to see new objects, statements, concepts, relationships, and ways to act with power and authority; it can also help you see which aspects of your own discursive and nondiscursive practices you wish to stop engaging in.

Foucault dreamed of vastly increased conversations between multiple and differentiated voices (1990, pp. 328–30). This is precisely what occurs when teachers and students take up curricular topics in a generative way.

Conclusion

In the interview entitled "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations" given shortly before his death, Foucault described ways to converse with people or documents to understand what is different in their knowledge, their understandings of acts of power, and their experiences. He referred to conversationalists' rights to exchange respectful questions and answers and "to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning" (1997, pp. 111–12).

Although it takes a great deal of time, effort, and goodwill, Foucault's analyses demonstrate that it is possible to work to understand more than one

system of knowledge and power at a time. It is also possible to perceive, think, feel, care, and communicate before you are completely acculturated. Children do not need to be trained out of raising their voices with their subjugated knowledges or denied the opportunity to create from them in powerful ways. Through experiences and conversations shared between students and teachers, where each voice is heard while those listening try genuinely to build their understanding of what is new in the speaker's knowledge, there is a possibility for a renewal of knowledge and the acts of power that will assist us in working together to build a 21st century system of knowledge and power that will help us articulate what we must learn and do to live well on Earth with one another.

Will we find that together we have the energy, motivation, and opportunities to find the wedges that will allow us to transform our own understandings and power relations? Will we make the conversations we need happen? Foucault pointed to how this next transformation of knowledge and power may be possible. In a 1980 interview entitled "The Masked Philosopher," Foucault unmasked and declared his appreciation of *curiosity:*

> [To me, curiosity] evokes the care one takes of what exists and what might exist; a sharpened sense of reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing; a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental.
>
> I dream of a new age of curiosity. We have the technical means; the desire is there; there is an infinity of things to know; the people capable of doing such work exist. So what is our problem? Too little: channels of communication that are too narrow, almost monopolistic, inadequate. We mustn't adopt a protectionist attitude, to stop "bad" information from invading and stifling the "good." We must rather increase the possibility for move-

> ment backwards and forwards. This would not lead, as people often fear, to uniformity and leveling down, but, on the contrary, to the simultaneous existence and differentiation of these various networks. (1990, p. 328)

This wonderful statement comes very close to Hans-Georg Gadamer's characterization of the "to and fro" (1994, p. 104) movement of conversation in which we might, with "good will," (see Michelfelder & Palmer, 1999) risk and challenge what each of us holds as truth and open ourselves to the real possibility that the meaning that the other person is communicating will affect us by allowing us to realize something that has not occurred to us before, which may transform our own understanding.

Taking this risk and facing this challenge will allow each of us to tell the truth about ourselves and listen to the truth of others in ways that have the potential to transform our modern Western systems of knowledge and power, and which can help us renew our understanding about how to live well on Earth with each other.

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Key: The date of the original French publication is bolded.
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Internet Resources

There are literally tens of thousands of online resources for Michel Foucault. Below is a list of cites that were accessible as of August 22, 2004:

Websites with great reference lists and links to discussion forums, online publications, etc.

http://www.foucault-studies.com/

http://www3.baylor.edu/~Matt_Brigham/foucaultpage.html

http://www.scun.edu/~hfspc002 /foucault.hom.html

http://www.popcultures.com/theorists/foucault.html

http://www.qut.edu.au/edu/cpol/foucault/links2.html (this site is especially good. Full lists of primary and secondary sources excellent.)

Address for the Foucault and Education Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association

http://facstaff.uww.edu/heyningk/foucault/Listserv.htm

Encyclopedia Britannica Article on Michel Foucault

http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=35651& tocid=224985&query=michel%20foucault

Foucault Listserve

http://foucault.info/mailman/listinfo/foucault-1

Book Review

http://www.thenewpress.com/books/foucault.htm